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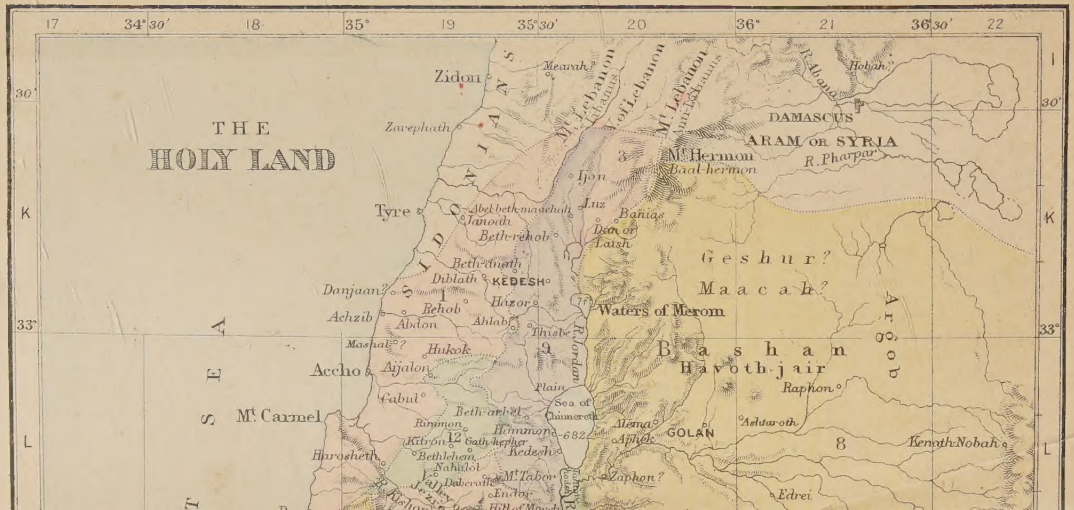
THE
HOLY LAND
Zidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Mt. Lebanon
Libanus
V. of Lebanon
Mt. Lebanon
Anti-Libanus
R. Abana
Hobah?
DAMASCUS
ARAM OR SYRIA
R. Pharpar
Mt. Hermon
Baal-hermon
Ijon
Luz
Banias
Dan or Laish
Abel-beth-maachah
Janoah
Beth-rehob
Beth-anath
Diblath
KEDESH
Danjaan?
Achzib
Rehob
Abdon
Hazor
Ahlab
Thisbe
Waters of Merom
Geshur?
Maacah?
Argob
Mashal?
Hukok
Accho
Aijalon
Cabul
Plain
Sea of Chinnereth
Beth-arbel
Rimmon
Hammon
Kitron
Gath-hepher
Bethlehem
Kedesh
Nahalol
Mt. Tabor
Daberath
Endor
Hill of Moreh
Mt. Carmel
Harosheth
Bashan
Havoth-jair
Raphon
Alema
Aphek
GOLAN
Ashtaroth
Kenath-Nobah
Zaphon?
Edrei
R. Jordan
SIDONIANS
SEA
17
34° 30′
18
35°
19
35° 30′
20
36°
21
36° 30′
22
30′
33°
K
L
I
8
9
12
77
682

Reference to Tribes
1 ASHER
2 BENJAMIN
3 DAN
4 EPHRAIM
5 GAD
6 ISSACHAR
7 JUDAH
8 MANASSEH
9 NAPHTALI
10 REUBEN
11 SIMEON
12 ZEBULUN
English Miles
0 10 20 30
Sea of the Plain or Dead Sea
1282 Feet below Mediterranean
GREAT SEA
PHILISTINES
SAMARIA
JUDAH
GILEAD
AMMON
MOAB
EDOM
Mt. Seir
Wilderness of Judah
Wilderness of Paran
Amorites
Araba
Joppa
Ashdod
Askelon
Gaza
Gath
Ekron
Gezer
Jabneh
Lachish
Beersheba
Moladah
Aroer
Aslij
Zephath or Hormah
Ain Mubweileh
Ain Gadis
Bozrah
JERUSALEM
HEBRON
SHECHEM
Mt Gerizim
Mt Ebal
Mt Gilboa
Joghbehah
Rabbah
Heshbon
Medeba
Mt Nebo
Aroer
Dibon
Kiriathaim
BEZER
Beth-gamul
Mizpeh
Ramoth-gilead
Jabesh-gilead
Succoth
Penuel
Tubbok
Jabbok
Salecah
Hauran
Nahr Iskanderûneh
Nahr el Fâlik
Nahr el Auja
Jordan
Ephraim
Manasseh
Issachar
Zebulun
Naphtali
Reuben
Gad
Simeon
Dan
Asher
Benjamin
Judah
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THE FIRST AND SECOND BOOKS

OF THE

KINGS

Edited by the

REV. J. RAWSON LUMBY, D.D.

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PREFACE
BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE General Editor of *The Cambridge Bible for Schools* thinks it right to say that he does not hold himself responsible either for the interpretation of particular passages which the Editors of the several Books have adopted, or for any opinion on points of doctrine that they may have expressed. In the New Testament more especially questions arise of the deepest theological import, on which the ablest and most conscientious interpreters have differed and always will differ. His aim has been in all such cases to leave each Contributor to the unfettered exercise of his own judgment, only taking care that mere controversy should as far as possible be avoided. He has contented himself chiefly with a careful revision of the notes, with pointing out omissions, with

suggesting occasionally a reconsideration of some question, or a fuller treatment of difficult passages, and the like.

Beyond this he has not attempted to interfere, feeling it better that each Commentary should have its own individual character, and being convinced that freshness and variety of treatment are more than a compensation for any lack of uniformity in the Series.

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MAPS:—

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Jerusalem ..... *to face p.* 66

The Dominions of Solomon ..... *to face p.* 109

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[1] *Seder Olam Rabba* 20.

We have but to turn to the Books of Chronicles to find out the character of the writings to which these three general titles are given. The Chronicler adheres so closely to the language of Kings throughout the history of Solomon, that a comparison at once convinces us that he drew his narrative from the same documents as the earlier compiler. But he (2 Chron. ix. 29) describes his authorities as 'the Book' (R. V. history) 'of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer.'

We find here the key to the origin and character of all the three sources of information accessible to the compiler of Kings. 'The Book of the acts of Solomon' comprised three works written by prophets contemporary with Solomon, and which, embracing the whole period of his reign, were naturally soon gathered into one treatise, and called by one collective name. The prophetic spirit and the religious drift of all we read in the history is thus accounted for. In the notes it has been remarked that the whole purpose of the narrative is to picture Solomon's life a success, and the building of the Temple as acceptable, in so far only as the one was led in the fear of Jehovah, and the other stood as a token of obedience to the divine will; and that when Solomon's decline began, it is God who is represented as raising up the adversaries against him. A record of such a character is the composition of no mere historiographer, but bears on the face of it the imprint of prophetic hands.

When we turn to the second authority which the compiler quotes, 'the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah' and compare with it the works cited by the Chronicler, the same conclusion is arrived at. 'The Book' (R. V. histories) 'of Shemaiah the prophet and Iddo the seer' are quoted by him (2 Chron. xii. 15) as containing the events of the reign of Rehoboam, and his narrative, drawn from thence, is practically identical with the record in Kings. The same may be said concerning Abijam's reign, for which the Chronicler refers (2 Chron. xiii. 22) to 'the story' (R. V. commentary) 'of the prophet Iddo.' The authority which he gives for Jehoshaphat's

reign (2 Chron. xx. 34) is 'the Book' (R. V. history) 'of Jehu, the son of Hanani.' And after this reference a sentence follows, translated in R. V. thus: 'which is inserted in the Book of the kings of Israel[1].' This is precisely the explanation to which all the evidence tends. The prophets wrote their several books, and as time went on they *were taken up*, and included in the large collection which at last acquired the title 'the Book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel (or Judah).' We find it noticed further (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) that Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz was the writer of the history of Azariah (Uzziah), and also (2 Chron. xxxii. 32) of the acts and good deeds of Hezekiah. But here again it is stated expressly that 'the vision of Isaiah' is included in 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel.' Once more concerning Hezekiah's son, Manasseh, the Chronicler tells us that his acts are to be found partly 'in the Book of the kings of Israel' (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18) and in the following verse, that other things concerning him are written 'in the history of Hozai' as the R. V. renders, but the LXX., which the A. V. follows, translated 'among the sayings of the seers.'

With regard to the other kings, whose history is recorded in Chronicles, the writer is content with referring to 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel,' as he does (2 Chron. xvi. 11) for Asa, and (2 Chron. xxv. 28) for Amaziah, and (2 Chron. xxviii. 26) for Ahaz; or, with the names of the kingdoms in reverse order, to 'the Book of the kings of Israel and Judah,' as (2 Chron. xxvii. 7) for Jotham, (2 Chron. xxxv. 27) for Josiah, and (2 Chron. xxxvi. 8) for Jehoiakim. In one case, that of Joash, (2 Chron. xxiv. 27) he merely calls his authority 'the story' (R. V. commentary) 'of the book of the kings.' The three modes of reference last mentioned seem to indicate that before the Chronicler undertook his work, the process of combination had gone on so far as to convert all these separate 'commentaries,' 'histories,' 'visions,' and 'stories' into one compre-

[1] The A. V. gave for this clause 'who *is mentioned* in the Book of the kings of Israel,' but on the margin was added the literal rendering of the Hebrew 'was made to ascend,' which when applied to the book and not to the person intimates what is now expressed in R. V.

hensive work which could be cited indifferently as 'the Book of the kings of Judah and Israel,' or, 'of Israel and Judah,' or simply as 'the Book of the kings.'

Of the kings of Israel, except in one or two places where their acts are interwoven with, and affect the history of, the kingdom of Judah, the Chronicler makes no mention. We may safely conclude, however, from the way in which he so often speaks of the 'Book of the kings of Israel and Judah,' that he had before him their annals also, though it was foreign to his purpose to record much of them. And the whole history of both kingdoms had been put together on the same plan, and out of like materials, these materials being the writings of the prophets who flourished during the several reigns. We need not then be surprised to find large sections of 'the Book of kings' devoted to the lives of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha, and to the history of Micaiah's appearance before Ahab. The writings of the prophets were not exhausted by the history of the two kingdoms, and no theme would more commend itself to the prophetic scribe than the mighty works of those two champions, who stood forth, at a time when the house of Ahab had led Israel into heathen idolatry, to make known in Israel's darkest days, by action and speech, that Jehovah had still 'a prophet in Israel.'

It will be seen, then, that the 'Book of Kings' must consist in great part of the writings of those who were contemporary with the events of which they wrote, and that we cannot treat the book as a work of the date when the Compiler lived. And being gathered in the main from prophetic histories, there will naturally be a similarity of motive pervading the whole. To the Compiler we may ascribe those portions which compose the framework of each particular reign, i.e. the accounts of the accession and parentage[1], and of the death and character of the

[1] It is precisely in these portions that the chronological difficulties present themselves. Some of the smaller inconsistences (cf. 2 Kings viii. 25 with ix. 29) may have arisen because the Compiler made use of several authorities, in which the numbers were not quite in accord, but which, from the Jewish mode of reckoning in such matters, would not

several kings, in which there is exhibited hardly any variation of form; but the date of all which is not of this character must be judged of from internal evidence. The uniform setting of the whole work is important to be noticed as it is a proof of the unity of the composition. To its present form the work has been brought all by the same hand.

ii. Hebrew Text and Versions.

It is much to be deplored that we possess no MSS. of the Hebrew Bible of a date earlier than the 10th century of the Christian era. Thus more than a thousand years intervene between the close of the Old Testament Canon and the writing of our oldest copy. It would be marvellous if during so long a period the fallibility of scribes had not, here and there, suffered mistakes to find their way into the text. But the conditions under which it was transmitted were undoubtedly very favourable to its correct preservation. During many centuries the consonants only were written down, the knowledge of the vowels, that were to be read with them, being preserved by tradition[1]. This caused correct reading to be a large part of a Jew's education, and to insure the retention of the proper vowels, it was permitted to any one in the synagogue to interrupt the reader if he introduced a change. Thus the whole people were made conservators of the sacred text.

It was only when the Jewish nation became dispersed, and the safeguards, which had been sufficient and available among a small and united people, were found to be inoperative, that the Jewish scribes, who were the guardians of the correct tradition (*Massorah*, as it was called), began to add vowel signs to the consonants, that the people in their dispersion might all pre-

appear conflicting. More serious discrepancies (cf. 2 Kings xv. 30 with 33) must be attributed to later hands. We cannot suppose that the two verses just referred to were allowed to stand as they now do by the original Compiler of the book.

[1] See note on 2 Kings xviii. 19.

serve the sacred words as they had been handed down for generations. We cannot fix the date when the vowel points were added, but the work was certainly not completed before the death of Jerome, A.D. 420 ; and probably not for a century or two later. This form of the text is the same in all our Hebrew MSS., and as it exhibits the traditional reading, it is often spoken of as the *Massoretic* (i.e. traditional) text. When once such an authoritative text was put forth, none would be more anxious than the Jews themselves to destroy all copies of a different kind. Hence comes, in part at least, the absence of very early MSS.

The way in which the vowel points were introduced appears to have been somewhat of this kind. It was a gradual process. At the commencement some copy of the consonantal text was selected as the standard, perhaps because it was beautifully written. To this standard all future copies were made to conform. The vowels were probably first attached to the books of the Law, and to those portions of the Prophets, which, like the Law, were read in the public services. In process of time the system of vocalization was extended to every part of the text. But it was found that in the standard text adopted there were many places where the consonants written down were not those which tradition required to be read. That the consonants of the accepted text might not on this account be modified, the *Massoretes* adopted the plan of putting, in such places, the consonants of traditional reading on the margin. These marginal notes they marked by a word (*Keri*) signifying *Read* thus, and in contradistinction the standard text is termed the *Kethib*, i.e. *written.* For an instance see notes on 2 Kings xiv. 13.

The absence of any early MSS. gives their value to the ancient versions. They were made at a time anterior to the fixing of the Massoretic text, and therefore help us to judge of the correctness of the Hebrew which has been preserved to us. Three of these are deserving of special mention.

(1) *The Septuagint.* This is a Greek version made in Alexandria at various times during the third and second centuries before Christ. It owes its name to an ill-founded tradition that it was made by 72 (*Septuaginta* = 70, the nearest

round number) persons sent to Alexandria from Jerusalem at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus. A comparison of the various parts shews that it was neither made all at one time, nor all by the same translators; but some time before the birth of Christ in consequence of the wide prevalence of the Greek language this version had largely taken the place of the Hebrew text. From it by far the largest part of the quotations in the New Testament are made: it was used by such writers as Philo and Josephus, by the Greek Fathers, and from it were made the various Latin translations which existed before the Vulgate. There exist, as will be seen from the notes, two principal recensions of the Septuagint, one preserved in the Alexandrine MS., which is in the British Museum, and another at the Vatican. The former of these has been largely brought into harmony with the present Hebrew text, and from this cause its value for critical purposes is not so great. The Vatican MS. varies considerably by additions and omissions, and also in arrangement, from the Massoretic text and seems here and there to represent a somewhat different Hebrew. In the books of Kings the help which we derive from the Septuagint is not so great as in some other books (e.g. Samuel) but it will be seen from the notes that certain alterations in the Hebrew text are suggested by it, a few of which for example, in the account of the building of the Temple, are clearly necessary to be made. One long addition has been specially described in the notes (see p. 145) but it deals with a matter which does not concern the correct reading of the text. The history also of which it treats, refers much more to what happened in the days of David than of Solomon, so that all but a very few words in it seem to be out of place where it is inserted.

(2) *The Targum*[1] (or interpretation) ascribed to Jonathan Ben-Uzziel. This is a Chaldee paraphrase reduced to writing about the fourth century after Christ. For correction of the text it is not so valuable as for the traditional interpretations

[1] *Targum* is from the same root from which *dragoman*, = an interpreter, is derived.

which it preserves. It was for a long period forbidden to put Targums into writing, and a story is told that when, as Herod's temple was in building, a written Targum on the book of Job was shewn, an outcry was made that it should be buried beneath the foundation-stones that it might not come into any one's possession. But Targums exist on nearly the whole of the Bible, though many are of very late date, and only one, that named of Onkelos, on the Pentateuch, is of earlier time than the Targum of Jonathan on the Prophets.

(3) *The Vulgate.* This name[1] is now given to the Latin version of the Bible made by Jerome of which the Old Testament portion was translated not from the Septuagint but directly from the Hebrew. After preparing, at the request of Pope Damasus, a revision of the Latin version of the New Testament, Jerome took up his residence, from A.D. 387 till his death in A.D. 420, at Bethlehem. There he studied the Hebrew Scriptures, with the guidance of the best Jewish scholars then living in the Holy Land and produced at various times a new Latin translation. Of this Samuel and Kings first appeared[2]. Hence the version which he made is a very precious guide on points of traditional interpretation, and it is also very important as evidence that since Jerome's day the original Text has suffered no alteration worth noticing. We can see from his renderings that the vowel points now inserted were not always the same as were accepted by Jerome's teachers, but in the matter of consonants his Hebrew was substantially just the same as ours.

[1] *Vulgata versio*, was used before Jerome's time, and by Jerome himself, for the *current* Latin Version in use. It is a rendering of the Greek ἡ κοινὴ ἔκδοσις which was a name given to the current text of the Septuagint. But after Jerome's Version took the place of all others in the Western Church the name *Vulgate* was confined to it.

[2] The preface which Jerome wrote for these books is generally known as the *Prologus Galeatus*, and gives a full and interesting account of the Hebrew Canon, with the arrangement of the books, and the reasons for such arrangement.

iii. Summary of the contents of the Book (I. and II. Kings).

A. Closing days of the life of David. (i. 1—ii. 11.)

i. *Contest for the succession.*

(*a*) Adonijah in David's sickness usurps the kingdom. 1 Kings i. 1—10.
(*b*) Appeal of Bathsheba and Nathan. i. 11—27.
(*c*) Solomon is anointed, as the succession is in dispute. i. 28—41.
(*d*) Alarm of the usurper and his adherents. i. 42—53.

Evil is still raised up out of David's house; the sword shall never depart. (2 Sam. xii. 10, 11.)

ii. *David's dying charge.*

(*a*) To Solomon himself. ii. 1—4.
(*b*) Concerning Joab, Barzillai, and Shimei. ii. 5—9.
(*c*) Death of David. ii. 10, 11.

The spirit of his charge is of the Law, not of the Gospel. 'Of Thy goodness slay mine enemies.' (Ps. cxliii. 12.)

B. King Solomon in all his glory. (ii. 12—x. 29.)

i. *Removal of his adversaries.*

(*a*) Adonijah asking Abishag to wife is put to death. ii. 12—25.
(*b*) Abiathar is thrust out of the priesthood. ii. 26, 27.
(*c*) Joab is slain at the altar. ii. 28—35.
(*d*) Shimei transgresses and is not spared. ii. 36—46.

'The wrath of a king is as messengers of death.' (Prov. xvi. 14.) Thus, in the spirit of his age, did Solomon shew himself a man.

ii. *His piety and wisdom.*

(*a*) Gibeon the great high place, no Temple or royal house yet built. iii. 1—4.
(*b*) Solomon's dream, and his prayer for wisdom. iii. 5—15.
(*c*) God's wisdom in him manifest by his judgement on the harlots. iii. 16—28.

He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. (2 Sam. xxiii. 3.)

iii. *Solomon's magnificence and fame.*

(*a*) The princes which he had. iv. 1—6.
(*b*) His commissariat officers. iv. 7—19.
(*c*) Joy and abundance of his reign. iv. 20—25.
(*d*) His chariots, horses, and their maintenance. iv. 26—28.
(*e*) His understanding and excellent wisdom. iv. 29—34.
(*f*) Hiram, the king of Tyre, seeks his friendship, and grants timber for the Temple. v. 1—10.
(*g*) Solomon's league with Hiram. v. 11, 12.
(*h*) Solomon's levy of labourers to work in Lebanon. v. 13—18.

'There shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.' (1 Kings iii. 13.) A promise richly fulfilled.

iv. *Solomon's Temple.*

(*a*) Dimensions of the building. vi. 1—4.
(*b*) The chambers that enclosed it round about. vi. 5—10.
(*c*) God's promise to dwell there. vi. 11—13.
(*d*) The Holy place and the Oracle. vi. 14—22.
(*e*) The cherubim. vi. 23—28.
(*f*) Adornment of the walls, the floor and the doors. vi. 29—35.
(*g*) The inner court. vi. 36.
(*h*) The building finished in seven years. vi. 37, 38.

'He shall build a house for My name...I will be his father and he shall be My son. (2 Sam. vii. 13, 14.)

v. *His royal palace.*

(*a*) The house of the forest of Lebanon. vii. 1—5.
(*b*) The porch of pillars. vii. 6.
(*c*) The porch of the throne. vii. 7.
(*d*) The house of Pharaoh's daughter. vii. 8.
(*e*) Excellence of the work, and the court round about it. vii. 9—12.

Note the brief mention of what was built for the king's own use. Stonework and cedar here, but the gold, and what is richest, for the house of the Lord.

vi. *Works of Hiram, the Tyrian founder.*

(*a*) He casts the pillars, Jachin and Boaz. vii. 13—22.
(*b*) The molten sea. vii. 23—26.

(*c*) The bases and the lavers to stand upon them. vii. 27—39.
(*d*) Summary of Hiram's work for the exterior. vii. 40—47.
(*e*) The vessels of gold for the Holy place. vii. 48—51.

Art becomes the handmaid of true religion. 'The house that is to be builded for the Lord must be exceeding magnifical.' (1 Chron. xxii. 5.)

vii. *The feast of the Dedication.*

(*a*) Assembly of Israel. They bring up the ark, and the Temple is filled with the cloud of Glory. viii. 1—11.
(*b*) Solomon's address and thanksgiving. viii. 12—21.
(*c*) God's constant regard invoked. viii. 22—30.
(*d*) When an oath is made at the altar. viii. 31, 32.
(*e*) In times of defeat, of drought, of plague, pestilence and famine. viii. 33—40.
(*f*) For strangers who come to worship there. viii. 41—43.
(*g*) In time of war, and in the day of captivity. viii. 44—53.
(*h*) Solomon blesseth the assembly. viii. 54—61.
(*i*) The sacrifices, the feasting and the dismissal of the people. viii. 62—66.
(*k*) God's second appearance to Solomon. Promises and warnings. ix. 1—9.

'Beautiful for situation is...the city of the great King. God is known in her palaces for a refuge.' (Ps. xlviii. 2, 3.) This knowledge was the source of Israel's greatness under Solomon.

viii. *Solomon's power, wealth and fame.*

(*a*) Solomon's gift of cities to Hiram. ix. 10—14.
(*b*) The levy of forced labour from Canaanites and Israelites. ix. 15—23.
(*c*) Pharaoh's daughter brought to her own house. ix. 24.
(*d*) Solomon's observance of the appointed feasts. ix. 25.
(*e*) Fleet of Solomon and Hiram. ix. 26—28.
(*f*) Visit of the queen of Sheba, her wonder, praise and large gifts. x. 1—13.
(*g*) Solomon's revenue, and wide fame. x. 14—25.
(*h*) His chariots and horsemen, and traffic with Egypt. x. 26—29.

'Because of Thy Temple at Jerusalem, kings shall bring presents

unto Thee.' (Ps. lxviii. 29.) Mark how it is in conjunction with the king's worship, according to God's law, that this prosperity is showered upon him.

C. Solomon is turned away from the Lord, and his prosperity is broken. (xi. 1—43.)

God's face is set against Solomon.

(*a*) The anger of God against Solomon, whose heart the strange wives turned away. xi. 1—13.
(*b*) God raises up one adversary, Hadad the Edomite. xi. 14—22.
(*c*) A second adversary, Rezon the son of Eliada. xi. 23—25.
(*d*) A third out of Israel, Jeroboam the son of Nebat. xi. 26—28.
(*e*) Ahijah's prophecy and promise to Jeroboam. xi. 29—39.
(*f*) Solomon would have killed Jeroboam. xi. 40.
(*g*) Death of Solomon. xi. 41—43.

'The Lord shall stir up jealousy like a man of war. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that say to the molten images, Ye are our Gods.' (Is. xlii. 13—17.)

D. The divided kingdoms, Israel and Judah. (1 Kings xii. 1—2 Kings xviii. 12.)

i. *Prelude to the separation.*

(*a*) Petition made to Rehoboam at Shechem. xii. 1—5.
(*b*) He follows evil counsel. xii. 6—15.
(*c*) Revolt of Israel. Jeroboam chosen for king. xii. 16—20.
(*d*) Rehoboam forbidden to fight against Israel. xii. 21—24.

God's hand is manifest in the whole story. 'God is the judge, He putteth down one and lifteth up another.' (Ps. lxxv. 7.)

ii. *ISRAEL. The son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.*

(*a*) Jeroboam's policy; the golden calves, the feast devised of his own heart. xii. 25—33.
(*b*) A man of God from Judah to Israel. His message. xiii. 1—10.
(*c*) His disobedience and its punishment. xiii. 11—32.
(*d*) Jeroboam persists in his evil way. xiii. 33, 34.
(*e*) Sends to Ahijah concerning the sickness of his son. xiv. 1—6.

(*f*) The prophet's message. The truth thereof confirmed by its partial fulfilment. xiv. 7—18.

(*g*) Death of Jeroboam. xiv. 19, 20.

Commandments spurned bring their punishment. 'To obey is better than sacrifice. Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.' (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23.)

iii. *JUDAH. The lamp preserved for David's sake.*

(*a*) Evil in Judah under Rehoboam. xiv. 21—24.

(*b*) Shishak plunders the Temple and the king's house. xiv. 25—28.

(*c*) Death of Rehoboam. xiv. 29—31.

(*d*) Abijam walks in the sins of his father. xv. 1—8.

(*e*) Asa's heart perfect with the Lord. xv. 9—15.

(*f*) Growing weak in trust he makes a league with Benhadad. xv. 16—22.

(*g*) Asa's death. xv. 23—24.

The spoiled Temple is a fit emblem of the falling away of David's line. God delights in the material house only when true worship is paid in it.

iv. *ISRAEL. The way of Jeroboam. The kings.*

(*a*) Nadab is slain by Baasha. xv. 25—31.

(*b*) Baasha king. xv. 32—34.

(*c*) The word of the Lord unto Baasha by the mouth of Jehu. xvi. 1—7.

(*d*) Elah, son of Baasha, slain by Zimri. xvi. 8—14.

(*e*) Zimri's seven days' reign, and traitor's end. xvi. 15—20.

(*f*) Omri, after a conflict, obtains the throne and builds Samaria. xvi. 21—28.

(*g*) Ahab exceeds the wickedness of all who went before him. xvi. 29—34.

'Through the wrath of the Lord the land is darkened...no man shall spare his brother.' (Is. ix. 19.) Yet note in Israel the 'pride and stoutness of heart,' which the prophet rebukes, as shewn in their grand projects of building. (Is. ix. 10.) 'For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof.' (Prov. xxviii. 2.)

v. *Elijah. The prophet in Israel.*

(*a*) The famine foretold. Elijah hides at Cherith and in Sarepta. xvii. 1—16.
(*b*) The widow's son dies and is restored. xvii. 17—24.
(*c*) Elijah in the presence of Ahab. xviii. 1—16.
(*d*) The challenge. God against Baal. xviii. 17—29.
(*e*) The Lord He is God. Baal's priests are slain. xviii. 30—40.
(*f*) Promise of rain. xviii. 41—46.
(*g*) Flight of Elijah to Horeb. xix. 1—8.
(*h*) God's revelations to him there. xix. 9—18.
(*i*) The calling of Elisha. xix. 19—21.

The bravest of God's heroes, yet broken in heart at last. He longed to do so much, but learnt at length how God works. 'I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time.' (Is. lx. 22.)

vi. *Syrian invasion of Israel.*

(*a*) Arrogant claims of Benhadad. xx. 1—12.
(*b*) Victory promised and given to Ahab. xx. 13—21.
(*c*) A new attack defeated in like manner. xx. 22—30.
(*d*) Benhadad as cringeing as before he was haughty. xx. 31—34.
(*e*) Ahab weakly spares the man whom God had doomed. xx. 35—43.

Jehovah, longsuffering, does not cast off his rebellious people, nor let them fall into any hands, but those of his special instruments. 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.' (Malachi iii. 6.)

vii. *Naboth is stoned and is dead.*

(*a*) Naboth the Jezreelite refuses to part with his vineyard. xxi. 1—4.
(*b*) Jezebel compasses the death of Naboth. xxi. 5—16.
(*c*) Ahab taking possession hears God's doom from Elijah. xxi. 17—24.
(*d*) Some signs of repentance gain Ahab a respite. xxi. 25—29.

The evil examples on the throne have their fruit in other places. 'If a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked.' (Prov. xxix. 12.)

viii. *Judah and Israel in alliance.*

(*a*) Jehoshaphat goes with Ahab to Ramoth-gilead. xxii. 1—28.

(*b*) Ahab's ignoble end, according to the word of Elijah. xxii. 29—40.

(*c*) Jehoshaphat's reign over Judah. xxii. 41—50.

(*d*) Ahaziah follows Ahab, on his throne and in his sins. xxii. 51—2 Kings i. 18.

(*e*) Elijah taken away. His spirit rests on Elisha. ii. 1—18.

(*f*) Elisha heals the waters at Jericho, and curses the youths at Beth-el. ii. 19—25.

(*g*) Israel and Judah war against Moab. iii. 1—27.

Note the evil influence of this alliance on Jehoshaphat. He asks for a prophet of the Lord, in the first expedition at the outset, but then he neglects his words; to the second war he goes, and only thinks of the Lord's prophet, when he is in deep peril. Joined with Ahab in policy, he is made his equal in penalty. 'In his son's days' God brought evil upon his house.

ix. *Elisha.* '*He did wonders in his life.*'

(*a*) Elisha multiplieth the widow's oil. iv. 1—7.

(*b*) He promises a son to the Shunammite, and restores him to life again. iv. 8—37.

(*c*) He heals the pottage at Gilgal, and satisfies a hundred men with twenty loaves. iv. 38—44.

(*d*) Naaman is healed. Gehazi becomes leprous. v. 1—27.

(*e*) Elisha causeth an axe-head to swim. vi. 1—7.

(*f*) He revealeth the plans of the Syrian king, and smites the Syrian troops with blindness. vi. 8—23.

(*g*) Siege of Samaria. In the famine Elisha foretells a sudden plenty, which cometh to pass. vi. 24—vii. 20.

(*h*) The Shunammite's land restored for Elisha's sake. viii. 1—6.

(*i*) Elisha foretells Ben-hadad's death, and Hazael's cruelty. viii. 7—15.

Elijah at his death appeared to have achieved but little, yet Jehovah's 'seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which had not bowed unto Baal' (1 Kings xix. 18) were found in many places, and gave some hope to the labours of Elisha. But as a whole, 'Ephraim was joined to idols.' (Hosea iv. 17.)

x. *Fruits of the alliance between Judah and Israel.*

(*a*) Jehoram king of Judah walks in the ways of the house of Ahab. viii. 16—24.

(*b*) Ahaziah, his son by Athaliah the daughter of Ahab, follows the same path. viii. 25—27.

(*c*) Another war with Syria. viii. 28, 29.

(*d*) Jehu anointed at Ramoth Gilead. ix. 1—14.

(*e*) Jehu slays both the kings, and Jezebel also. ix. 15—37.

The law had spoken in vain to Jehoshaphat, and now the penalty is strictly carried out. 'Thou shalt not make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following Me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you and destroy thee suddenly.' (Deut. vii. 3—4.)

xi. *ISRAEL. Jehu on the throne.*

(*a*) Ahab's sons put to death. x. 1—11.

(*b*) Jehu's zeal against the Baalites. x. 12—28.

(*c*) The zeal stops short in its course. x. 29—31.

(*d*) Israel begins to be cut short. Death of Jehu. x. 32—36.

'*My* zeal for the Lord' was Jehu's boast. He forgot that he was only the scourge of God. 'For he saith, By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent.' (Is. x. 13.)

xii. *JUDAH. Athaliah and Joash.*

(*a*) Athaliah murders all the royal family except Joash. xi. 1—3.

(*b*) Jehoiada plans to kill her and set Joash on the throne. xi. 4—21.

(*c*) Joash restores the dilapidated temple. xii. 1—16.

(*d*) Hazael's expedition against Jerusalem bought off. xii. 17—18.

(*e*) Joash is murdered by his servants. xii. 19—21.

'A man that is laden with the blood of any person shall flee unto the pit; let no man stay him.' (Prov. xxviii. 17 R.V.)

xiii. *ISRAEL. The house of Jehu.*

(*a*) Jehoahaz reigns ill, and is delivered into the hands of the Syrians. xiii. 1—3.

(*b*) A saviour promised on his repentance. xiii. 4—9.

(*c*) Jehoash succeeds and is an evil ruler. xiii. 10—13.

(*d*) Elisha on his death bed visited by Jehoash. xiii. 14—19.

(*e*) Death of Elisha. Victories of Jehoash over Syria. xiii. 20—25.

'The Lord hath sent you all his servants the prophets, rising early and sending them; but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear.' (Jer. xxv. 4.)

xiv. *JUDAH. Amaziah meddling to his hurt.*

(*a*) Amaziah reigns, and takes vengeance on his father's murderers. xiv. 1—6.
(*b*) He conquers the Edomites. xiv. 7.
(*c*) His proud challenge to Jehoash and his defeat at Beth-shemesh. xiv. 8—16.
(*d*) He is driven from Jerusalem by a conspiracy, and slain at Lachish. xiv. 17—20.
(*e*) Azariah's accession. xiv. 21—22.

The moderation of Amaziah was praiseworthy at first and in accord with God's law, but vanity led him astray. 'A man's pride shall bring him low.' (Prov. xxix. 23.)

xv. *ISRAEL. Third and fourth generations of Jehu's house.*

(*a*) Jeroboam II. follows in the ways of Jeroboam I. xiv. 23, 24.
(*b*) God has pity upon Israel. xiv. 25—27.
(*c*) Wars and victories of Jeroboam. xiv. 28.
(*d*) Zechariah, Jeroboam's son, succeeds. xiv. 29.
(*e*) Azariah reigns in Judah and is smitten with leprosy. xv. 1—7.
(*f*) Zechariah slain by Shallum brings Jehu's house to an end. xv. 8—12.

The zeal of Jehu's descendants was even less than his own. Yet God seemed waiting to the very end to enlarge His promise, to increase His grace. But 'their iniquities have turned away these things, and their sins have withholden good things from them.' (Jer. v. 25.)

xvi. *ISRAEL and JUDAH. The Syro-Ephraimite war.*

(*a*) Shallum, king of Israel, slain by Menahem. xv. 13—15.
(*b*) Menahem becomes a vassal of Assyria. xv. 16—22.
(*c*) Pekahiah, king of Israel, slain by Pekah. xv. 23—26.
(*d*) Pekah's kingdom attacked by Tiglath-pileser: Pekah slain by Hoshea. xv. 27—31.

(*e*) Jotham, king of Judah. Pekah and Rezin, king of Samaria, plot against him. xv. 32—38.

(*f*) Syro-Ephraimite war against Ahaz, who purchases the aid of Tiglath-pileser. xvi. 1—9.

(*g*) Ahaz is entangled with Syrian idolatry. His death. xvi. 10—20.

Sorely needed was the prophet's message. 'Violence and spoil is heard in her; before me continually is grief and wounds. Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest My soul depart from thee; lest I make thee desolate, a land not inhabited.' (Jer. vi. 7—8.)

xvii. *ISRAEL. Last days of the ten tribes.*

(*a*) Hoshea attacked and taken prisoner by Shalmaneser. xvii. 1—4.

(*b*) The people carried captive for their many sins. xvii. 5—23.

(*c*) Samaria colonized by the Assyrians. xvii. 24.

(*d*) The colonists learn something of the worship of Jehovah. xvii. 25—28.

(*e*) But they worship still their own idols also. xvii. 29—41.

(*f*) Hezekiah, king of Judah. Second notice of the captivity of Israel. xviii. 1—12.

'If they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation' (Jer. xii. 17). As a people the ten tribes appear no more.

E. The two tribes. (2 Kings xviii. 13—xxv. 30.)

i. *Hezekiah.*

(*a*) Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invades Judæa, and is bought off for a brief period. xviii. 13—16.

(*b*) Defiant message of the Assyrian. xviii. 17—37.

(*c*) Hezekiah sends his ministers to Isaiah the prophet. xix. 1—7.

(*d*) A second message of defiance. xix. 8—13.

(*e*) Hezekiah's prayer. xix. 14—19.

(*f*) The answer of Jehovah by his prophet. xix. 20—34.

(*g*) Assyrian overthrow. xix. 35—37.

(*h*) Hezekiah's sickness and recovery. xx. 1—11.

(*i*) His ostentation and the rebuke thereof. xx. 12—19.

(*k*) Death of Hezekiah. xx. 20, 21.

Hezekiah, a marvel of God's grace. 'A clean thing out of an unclean.' (Job xiv. 4.) Who but God doeth this?

ii. *Manasseh and Amon.*

(*a*) Manasseh reigns and undoes all that Hezekiah had done. xxi. 1—10.

(*b*) The doom of the land is sealed because of his sin. xxi. 11—18.

(*c*) Amon follows in his father's steps. xxi. 19—22.

(*d*) He is slain by a conspiracy of his servants. xxi. 23—26.

Manasseh's repentance avails for himself, but not for the nation he has led so far astray. Yet 'God looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which is right and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man.' (Job xxxiii. 27—29.)

But again of the perverse 'He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others; because they turned back from Him, and would not consider any of His ways.' (Job xxxiv. 25—27.)

iii. *Josiah.*

(*a*) Josiah succeeding repairs the temple. xxii. 1—7.

(*b*) Finding of the book of the Law and the effect thereof. xxii. 8—11.

(*c*) Huldah the prophetess consulted. Her answer. xxii. 12—20.

(*d*) Josiah destroys idolatry out of the land and defiles the altar at Beth-el. xxiii. 1—20.

(*e*) Keeps a solemn passover, and banishes superstitious rites. xxiii. 21—28.

(*f*) He is wounded at Megiddo and dies. xxiii. 29, 30.

'The remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is sweet as honey in all mouths and as music at a banquet of wine.' (Eccles. xlix. 1.)

iv. *The falling away.* '*The Lord could not pardon.*'

(*a*) Jehoahaz succeeds and is made prisoner by the Egyptians. xxxiii. 31—33.

(*b*) Jehoiakim set up by the Egyptians. xxiii. 34—37.

(*c*) He submits to Nebuchadnezzar, but soon revolts and is punished. xxiv. 1—7.

(*d*) Jehoiachin's brief reign. The beginning of the Captivity. xxiv. 8—16.

(*e*) Zedekiah reigns and rebels against Babylon. xxiv. 17—20.

(*f*) Siege and capture of Jerusalem, and of her last king. xxv. 1—8.

(*g*) Burning of the city and deportation of spoil and captives. xxv. 9—21.

(*h*) Gedaliah the governor of the residue being slain by Ishmael the people flee to Egypt. xxv. 22—26.

(*i*) Kindly treatment of Jehoiachin by Evil-merodach. xxv. 27—30.

And so was brought to pass what Jeremiah had foretold, and enforced by an example constantly present before those to whom the prophet's message was all in vain (Jer. vii. 12—16) 'Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh...and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now because ye have done all these works...therefore will I do unto this house which is called by My name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you and to your fathers as I have done to Shiloh...Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee.'

iv. Historical Survey of the Book of Kings.

With the exception of two reigns, this book embraces the whole regal period of Israelite history. The reign of Saul, the first king, had been almost an utter failure, that of David in many points was a signal success. The work of the compiler of Kings commences at David's deathbed, but he opens his history without introduction, clearly designing it to be a continuation of the books of Samuel. Solomon was anointed and enthroned before the death of his father because of an attempt, that was made by another brother, to seize the succession for himself, in defiance of a promise (1 Kings i. 13) which David had given to Bathsheba that Solomon should reign after him. The new king had not been long crowned before he received the dying charge of his father, and when the fierce measures against certain individuals, which David counselled, had been carried into

effect, Solomon became, as his name implies (1 Chron. xxii. 9) a man of peace. In strong contrast to the warlike times of David, is the recital of Hadad's apparently unopposed return to the throne of Edom, and of the establishment of Rezon as king in Damascus (1 Kings xi.).

Yet though he engaged but little in war, Solomon introduced in many ways a new and splendid era for his people. In literature and science he was instructed beyond the most learned men of the time; in commerce he established relations not only with Tyre, and the Hittite and Syrian kingdoms close at hand, but with Arabia, Egypt and perhaps with India through his fleet on the Red Sea, while ships of his were also sailing along with those of Phœnicia to the various countries on the Mediterranean. In art he called to his aid the best architectural skill which Tyre and Sidon could supply, while the internal organization of the land was made in its character as complete as possible to supply the magnificence and luxury of a court the fame of which drew the queen of distant Sheba to Jerusalem, where she found the reality to overpass every report that had been made to her concerning it. Hence we need not be surprised that among his wives Solomon numbered, beside the daughter of Pharaoh, princesses from all the nations round about; nor is it to be wondered at, when they beheld the lavish expenditure which had been bestowed on the temple, that they asked and obtained from the king that some, if not with equal, magnificence should be exhibited in honour of the divinities of the lands from whence they had come. Solomon was rich and manifestly fond of state. So there arose outside the city on the hill, afterwards known in consequence as the Mount of Offence, temples to Ashtoreth, whose worship his Zidonian artizans may have made well known to Israel, as well as to those other gods whom the writer of Kings terms 'the abominations' of Moab and of Ammon.

To meet the outlay needed for his buildings, and for the costly service of his court Solomon made heavy exactions from his people both in money and in forced labour. Hence his reign though glorious had been burdensome. Yet for

David's son, a monarch of such wide extended fame, burdens were for a long time patiently endured, but when Solomon's son succeeded his father a cry went up from the whole land 'Make our heavy burdens lighter.' Rehoboam was headstrong and, following foolish advice, spake not of relaxation but of greater severity, and in consequence of his words ten out of the twelve tribes fell away from David's house, and made them a king of their own. Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, the man whom they set up, was one who had been employed by Solomon to superintend the taskwork of his forced labourers. He seems to have sympathised with the murmurs which that service evoked and in some way or other to have sided with those who desired to be delivered from it. He also was encouraged by one of the prophets (1 Kings xi. 31) to take part with those who were the adversaries of Solomon. Hence before Solomon's death Jeroboam had been forced to flee into Egypt, but he appears to have returned about the time of that event, and to have been welcomed and accepted by the revolting tribes as their fittest leader. A separate kingdom was established with its capital at Shechem, and the new king, that his people might not be won over to Rehoboam by going up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, instituted two shrines in his own dominions, where he set up golden calves and persuaded the people to accept them as symbols of the Jehovah who had brought them out of Egypt. For this he is constantly branded by the writer of Kings as 'the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin.'

Rehoboam failed to win back his revolted subjects, but Jeroboam's action, in fortifying Penuel on the other side of the Jordan, seems to shew that he did not feel altogether secure on his throne, and would prepare for himself a stronghold in the mountainous region of Gilead. The reign of Rehoboam was in other respects not prosperous. The king of Egypt, Shishak, invaded the land (1 Kings xiv. 25), and plundered the temple of much of its wealth, while Jeroboam with the forces of the northern kingdom harassed Judah exceedingly (1 Kings xiv. 30). These attacks were successfully repelled by Abijam (2 Chron.

xiii. 19), Rehoboam's son, while Asa his grandson so strengthened his army as to be able to resist not only the northern power but also an invasion of the Ethiopians, who appear to have meditated an invasion of Judah similar to that of Shishak in the previous generation (2 Chron. xiv. 12).

Meanwhile in Israel Nadab, the son of Jeroboam, had turned his arms against the Philistines (1 Kings xv. 27), but in the course of the war was slain by one of his own people, Baasha; who also made himself king, and did to death all that belonged to Jeroboam. This fate had been proclaimed beforehand by the mouth of the same prophet (Ahijah) who had encouraged the founder of the new kingdom in his first revolt against Solomon. Kings in Israel succeeded one another with great rapidity, the throne being nearly always reached, as in Baasha's case, through the blood of a predecessor. In the reign of Omri, the sixth king, however, the power and influence of the ten tribes increased, and so great a mark did this sovereign make in the affairs of the neighbouring nations that in the Assyrian records the kingdom of Israel is continually spoken of as 'the house of Omri.' Omri built him a new capital, which he named Samaria, a name which ultimately came to be applied to the whole kingdom. From the Moabite stone we learn about the conflicts between him and his neighbour Mesha, the king of Moab, and the victory seems for a while to have been on the side of Israel, though the conquests of Omri and his son Ahab were all retaken by Moab in the days of Ahaziah, Ahab's son and successor. We find, too, that Omri was not always victorious against the Syrians, as after one defeat (1 Kings xx. 34) the Syrian monarch made streets for himself in the new-built city of Samaria.

The son of Omri seems to have gone beyond his father in his desire to adorn the land with magnificent buildings. He was the Solomon of the northern kingdom, both in his architectural tastes and in his connexion with Phœnicia. He had for wife a daughter of the king of Zidon; hence he could attract to his country workmen of the greatest skill of that period, and

we can picture to ourselves how gorgeous the fabrics must have been that are alluded to by the historian as 'the ivory house which he made and the many cities that he built.' By the wish of Jezebel his wife he reared up a grand temple to Baal, and at her instigation became a fervent devotee of the Phœnician divinities, so that it is said of him 'there was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness.'

The Syrians were to him most troublesome neighbours. Twice did Benhadad come against Samaria, and though he was repelled there, we find the Syrian forces in possession of Ramoth-gilead at the close of Ahab's reign. But the largest part of the history during the reign of Ahab is devoted to the work of the prophet Elijah. Into the midst of the excessive wickedness God sends the most wondrous of His prophets. He comes upon the scene most abruptly, and in the name of Jehovah announces 'there shall not be dew nor rain but according to my word.' Every part of Elijah's life bears out the description of the writer of Ecclesiasticus (xlviii. 1). He was 'as fire and his word burned like a lamp.' By a demonstration of the vanity of Baal-worship and of the truth of his own mission, he on one occasion for the moment carried the people with him and made them his agents in the slaughter of the idolatrous priesthood. But the evil appeared even then too deep-rooted for remedy, and the sentence of Jehovah was given, 'him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat.' 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel.' A sentence most terrible, but carried out to the very letter.

Ahab came to his death in the battle of Ramoth-gilead. Resolved to recover that city from the Syrians, he invited Jehoshaphat, who had succeeded his father Asa as king of Judah, to go with him to the war, for there was now peace and alliance between the two kingdoms. Jehoshaphat consented in most liberal wise, but the whole undertaking was disastrous. The troops of Israel and Judah fled like shepherdless sheep, and Ahab was wounded so fatally that he died the same day. He left many children, but his immediate successor was crippled by a fall,

and in his brief two years' reign Moab regained its freedom, nor could any effort be made to drive the Syrians from the trans-jordanic portion of Israel.

It is not unlikely that the magnificence of the house of Ahab proved attractive to Jehoshaphat, and probably the connexion of Ahab with the Phœnician power made his alliance one to be courted by the smaller kingdom. So it came to pass that a son of Jehoshaphat took to wife a daughter of Ahab, and Israel and Judah were completely at one. When therefore Jehoram, another son of Ahab, followed his brother on the throne of Israel, there was once more an alliance for war purposes between the two monarchs. Jehoram would fain subdue the revolted Moabites, and the king of Judah accompanies the son, as he had before accompanied the father, to battle, and likewise compels the Edomite monarch, who was at this time a vassal of Judah, to give the troops a passage through his country, and to contribute his help against Moab. The expedition, during which Elisha foretold a sudden supply of water to the thirsty army, was in the end attended with no success.

The northern enemy of Israel, the Syrians, must have been withheld in some way from their inroads upon Israel at the period when Jehoram found himself able to collect his troops and march southward against Moab, but the time of peace did not last long. We hear first of irregular bands of marauders sent by Syria to scour the country, whose plans however were thwarted now and again by information given to the Israelite king by the prophet Elisha. But at last Benhadad gathered his hosts together and investing Samaria reduced the population to the verge of starvation, so that the most revolting means were resorted to for maintaining life. The siege was however abandoned. A panic seized the Syrian troops, and when the Israelites heard of it and ventured forth they found the enemy's camp deserted and spoil of all kinds left in confusion. So plenty took the place of hunger. The Syrian king Benhadad, no long time after, was murdered as he lay on his sick bed by Hazael, one of his officers, who made himself king of Syria, and in the future wrought much evil upon Israel. We

know that already in Jehoram's reign the assaults of Hazael had commenced, for the army of Israel was holding Ramoth-gilead against him when the judgement pronounced a generation before upon the house of Ahab received its complete fulfilment.

At the death of Elijah Ahab's family were still reigning, and to the outward view not much had been accomplished by the prophet's life. But the fruit of his work made itself felt in the days of Elisha. Schools of the prophets were multiplied, the seven thousand, of whom God spake (1 Kings xix. 18) who had not bowed the knee to Baal, were made manifest in many places, and Elijah's words were remembered by some who appeared little likely to have borne them in mind. When the prophet foretold the doom of Ahab as he stood in the portion of the newly murdered Naboth, there was in the retinue of the king one Jehu the son of Nimshi, an officer of the Israelite army, who after Ahab's death came to be in chief command while Jehoram was holding Ramoth-gilead. Jehoram had gone from Ramoth to Jezreel because of a wound he had received, and in his absence Elisha despatched one of the sons of the prophets to give to Jehu a divine commission for the execution of utter destruction on the house of his master. Jehu had treasured up the saying of Elijah, and both he and his comrades were no unwilling instruments to carry out the sentence. Riding at once to Jezreel, they not only put to death Jehoram, but also Ahaziah, Jehoshaphat's son, the king of Judah who had come to visit his kinsman the king of Israel. Jehoram's dead body was left in Naboth's vineyard, while from a window in Jezreel, Jezebel was thrown down and trampled to death under the feet of Jehu's horses. By some questionable strokes of policy he succeeded in destroying all the children of Ahab, and in cutting off at one blow all who were given up to the worship of Baal. The Phœnician rites were abolished in Israel and never appeared again.

The name of Jehu is found in the Assyrian inscriptions more than once, and it is a sign of the great influence of the previous dynasty, that as Samaria for a long time was known to the Assyrians as the 'house of Omri,' so Jehu figures as 'the son of Omri.' It is not clear what Jehu's relations with Assyria were,

but we gather from the Scripture story (2 Kings x. 32) that they were not of such a nature as to help him to ward off the hosts of his nearer neighbours the Syrians. 'Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel' and from the prophecy of Amos (i. and ii.) we see that Moab and Ammon were in league with Syria, so that Jehu was beset on every side. Nor was the case of his successor any better (2 Kings xiii. 3). 'The Lord delivered Israel into the hand of Hazael, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days,' and the army of Jehoahaz was reduced at this time to the most insignificant dimensions (2 Kings xiii. 7). But the closing days of this king and the reign of his son and successor were of such a character as to gain the favour of God and the approval of His prophet, for Elisha on his death bed was visited by Jehoash, and promised him a succession of victories over his enemies. Encouraged no doubt by the prophet's words the king took up arms, and was able to drive the Syrian hosts out of the lands on the west of the Jordan, while in the days of Jeroboam II., the son and successor of Jehoash, the eastern districts of Gilead and Bashan were also recovered, and the dominion of Israel extended 'from the entering in of Hamath unto the sea of the Arabah,' a result which we are told had been foreseen and spoken of by the prophet Jonah, who flourished in these times.

But the whole nation was corrupt, and the luxury introduced by these conquests increased the evil. The picture of the life in Samaria at this period is painted for us by the prophet Amos, and as we read the description of the wanton excesses and sensual self-indulgence we are in no wonder that judgement came quickly upon the whole land. God was preparing his rod, the Assyrian, and even before the external blows fell, internal violence was working out the ruin of the nation. Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam II., was murdered after a short reign, and thus the four generations promised to Jehu's dynasty were brought to a violent end. The murderer Shallum was himself slain within a month, and the reign of his successor, Menahem, marked the annals of Israel with atrocities unknown before. It was in his day that the Assyrian power first came against the

land. Pul, the king of Assyria, who must previously have reduced the power of Syria, which lay between, drew near to attack Israel (2 Kings xv. 19), and Menahem compounded for the possession of his crown by becoming the vassal of Assyria, and by the payment of an enormous tribute which he exacted from the people of the land, and the amount of which demonstrates the wealthy condition of Israel even in this age of disorder and misrule. Pekahiah succeeded his father, but two years only passed away, before he was dethroned and slain by Pekah one of his captains. In the reign of this king we begin to discern clearly how the dominion of Assyria was spreading, and bringing into subjection all the neighbouring kingdoms.

Turning back to notice the kingdom of Judah, we find that when Ahaziah was slain by Jehu, Athaliah the queen, the daughter of Ahab, put all the seed royal to death, with the exception of one infant boy, who escaped and was kept in safety under the protection of the high priest. After a reign of six years, vengeance fell upon the bloodstained queen, and the seven years old child, Joash, was put upon the throne of David, and held his seat for forty years. But, like the northern kingdom, Judah was constantly feeling the pressure of Syrian inroads. The armies of Damascus came in the days of Joash, and overran the country of the Philistines, capturing the city of Gath (2 Kings xii. 17). Jerusalem lay temptingly near at hand, and Hazael set his face to go up thither, but the treasures of the temple and the king's house were drawn upon once more, the enemy retired, and we hear of no further troubles from war in this long reign, though for some reason his own people conspired against Joash, and did not let him die a natural death. Amaziah, the son of Joash, must also have been free from inroads on the north, for he was able, after punishing the murderers of his father, to lead his army southward and win great victories over the Edomites. Elated thereby, he sent a foolish challenge to Jehoash of Israel, and refusing good counsel, engaged in war with him, and was defeated in a battle at Beth-shemesh, and the future of his life is not very clearly set forth in the Bible narrative. We read how the king of Israel brake

down the northern walls of Jerusalem, and brought the king of Judah as a captive into his own capital, but whether he was put again on the throne, or his son was made regent during the rest of the father's lifetime, is a question which is involved in some obscurity.

But in spite of these losses to Israel, his son Azariah (Uzziah) must have been able to continue his father's conquests in Idumæa, for we find him restoring Elath (2 Kings xiv. 22), and thus opening once more the door of commerce to Judah by the way of the Red Sea, so that at this period Judah and Israel alike must have advanced to a high degree of material prosperity. Yet towards the end of his life king Azariah was smitten with leprosy for going into the temple and usurping the priest's duty of offering incense at the altar. The reign of his son Jotham was the time when an alliance was formed between Israel and Syria to crush the house of David and to put a creature of their own upon the throne of Judah, but Jotham was dead before these plans could be carried out. It is in the history of this Syro-Ephraimite war that Isaiah's prophetic ministry comes most markedly before us, and in connexion with which was uttered that wondrous prophecy of the Virgin-born son (Is. vii. 14), of which only the fulness of time beheld the complete fulfilment. The influence of the prophet was not however strong enough with king Ahaz to persuade him to trust wholly in Jehovah. Help was sought from Tiglath Pileser, and Israel's king became the tributary of Assyria. Damascus was taken and overthrown, and her king put to death, while as their manner was the conquerors carried away the Syrian population and settled them in a distant land. Pekah must have speedily ceased to harass Judah, probably deterred by the fate which had befallen his northern ally at the hands of the Assyrian king. Yet his death was not unbloody, for 'Hoshea the son of Elah smote him and slew him and reigned in his stead.' In the days of Pekah, Assyria had captured a large number of the cities in the tribe of Naphthali, in the north of Israel. It may be that Hoshea discovered that if he could bring about Pekah's death, he would have the Assyrians on his side and be

made king of Israel. For so it came to pass, but the alliance was only a short one if it were made. Tiglath Pileser was succeeded by Shalmaneser, and in a very short time the Israelite monarch, who should have been faithful to those who appear to have set him on the throne, was found to be intriguing with Egypt, and for this offence there was no pardon. The capital city was besieged and taken by Assyria after three years, during which time Shalmaneser died and was followed by Sargon. The inhabitants of the ten tribes were deported, while strange people from other lands were put in their place that the country might not be untenanted. Thus was brought about the end of the northern kingdom and the people of the ten tribes, with the exception of a few who returned with the captivity of Judah in the time of Cyrus, were lost from henceforth, in their intermixture with the nations whither they were carried away.

We have now to follow the history of Judah alone, from the sixth year of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz. This king instituted great religious reforms at the outset of his reign, but was sorely troubled by the inroads of Assyria. Greed of conquest was leading the armies of Nineveh nearer and nearer to the confines of Egypt, and urging them to absorb into their dominion all the countries which lay in the midst. Sennacherib had succeeded Sargon, and he came with his forces against the country of the Philistines, and while engaged in the siege of Lachish sent threats to Hezekiah that Jerusalem should next be assailed. The king of Judah bought, as he thought, a respite at a large price. But in spite of the tribute, from some reason or other, Sennacherib felt that Jerusalem was too strong a position to be left unsubdued in his rear while he marched toward Egypt. Hence his ambassadors came again with insulting blasphemies against the God of Judah, and taunting boasts against the feebleness of Hezekiah. But for His own sake and for His servant David's sake Jerusalem was at this time delivered. A spirit of panic came over the Assyrians, and a great part of their army was destroyed by a pestilence. Sennacherib in consequence withdrew, and soon after was slain by two of his own sons.

At this time we begin to hear of that Chaldæan power, which in the end prevailed against Assyria, and was the agent in the final overthrow of Jerusalem. Babylon was beginning to rise against Nineveh, and, as we may conclude, with a wish to get help in such a struggle, the Chaldæan ruler turned his thoughts to Judah. The envoys of Berodach-baladan—for he was at this time king of Babylon—came professedly to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from a severe disease, but really to sound him in reference to a war in common against the armies of Nineveh. Hezekiah was disposed to listen to their proposals, and made a great display of all his treasures and his military resources. For this, God's anger was pronounced against him by Isaiah, and he was told that the days should come when all his descendants and all that he possessed should be made a booty by these very Babylonians before whom he had been thus ostentatious. A portion of this prophecy was literally fulfilled in the next reign, for Manasseh the son of Hezekiah was taken prisoner and carried away to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), and thus began the first stage of Judah's subjection. Manasseh is handed down to us as an unprecedently wicked monarch, and Amon his son followed in his steps.

Under Josiah there was a time of much reformation and a hope of better days. He did more than any previous king to bring about purity of religious worship, and destroyed the magnificent temples which Solomon had erected on the Mount of Offence and which hitherto had been spared, probably because they stood far outside the city and were structures of much architectural beauty. Josiah was manifestly under the protection of Assyria, for when the king of Egypt, Pharaoh-necoh, had come by sea to Palestine, and was about to begin his march against the Assyrians, Josiah went northward in pursuit of him and was slain in a battle at Megiddo. This Egyptian expedition was for a brief time successful, but soon all that had belonged to Egypt down to the very confines of their own land fell into the hands of the Babylonians (2 Kings xxiv. 7). In the place of Josiah, the people of Judah set up his

son Jehoahaz. He was however allowed only a three months' reign, for Pharaoh made him prisoner and put his brother Jehoiakim into his place, no doubt making him swear subjection to Egypt, and imposing as large a tribute as he could exact.

Judah became now an object of attack by Babylon, and Nebuchadnezzar sent not only some Chaldæans to ravage the land but incited all the neighbouring tribes to join in the attack on the ally of Egypt. Jehoiakim reigned eleven years in this turmoil, his son and successor Jehoiachin but three months. For Egypt was now utterly broken, and the new king judged it to be his best policy to go forth and submit and make peace with Nebuchadnezzar if he might. His fate was a protracted captivity in Babylon, and along with him were carried away many of the distinguished people of the land, and among them went the prophet Ezekiel. A third son of Josiah, Zedekiah, was placed on the throne of Judah as Nebuchadnezzar's vassal, but after a time thought himself strong enough to rebel. This provoked the final blow. The Chaldæans besieged and took the city, burned the temple and all the chief buildings, and carried all but the poorest of the people into captivity. Over this remnant they placed a governor Gedaliah, but he was soon assassinated, thereupon the people fled away into Egypt in terror of what the Babylonians would do as vengeance for the murder of their officer. It was by these fugitives that Jeremiah was taken down to Egypt, and the after-fate of that prophet is wholly unknown.

One final word the writer of Kings records, an omen perhaps he thought it of a coming relief for the whole captive nation. In the thirty-seventh year of Jehoiachin's captivity a new king of Babylon, Evil-merodach, came to the throne, and lifted up the long imprisoned king of Judah, and raised him to a place of honour among the vassals whom he kept around him.

v. Character of the Book of Kings and its Relation to other books of the Old Testament.

The Book of Kings was clearly meant to be a continuation of the Books of Samuel. The writer alludes continually in the life of Solomon to the promises which had been made by God to David and which are mentioned in the second of those books. A son was to succeed David whose kingdom should be established of the Lord, who should build a house for the name of Jehovah, to whom God would be a father, and from whom the mercy of the Lord should not depart (2 Sam. vii.). To shew that this prophecy was fulfilled is the object of the Compiler of the Book of Kings, and whatever does not conduce thereto is passed over with but little notice. There elapsed, no doubt, a considerable time between the plague in Jerusalem, with which the Books of Samuel conclude, and the feeble age of David described in the opening paragraph of this Book. But to give historical events in their full and complete order is no part of our writer's aim. We can see this from every portion of his work. He opens his narrative with so much, and no more, of the story of David's closing life as serves to introduce the accession of Solomon, while to the history of that monarch, in whom the promises made to David had so conspicuous a fulfilment, he devotes about one quarter of his whole work. Solomon's glory and prosperity are set forth in the early chapters, and he is exhibited as the king whom God had set up over Israel to do judgement and justice. While he walked in this way it was well with him; but on his decline therefrom, chastisements divinely sent came heavy upon him and upon his son. Yet God would preserve a lamp unto David, and over and over again we are reminded that this promise was not forgotten (1 Kings xi. 36; xv. 4; 2 Kings viii. 19).

After the revolt of the ten tribes, and when a forbidden form of worship had been adopted in the northern kingdom, the history follows Israel in her long line of wicked princes till sin has brought destruction, while the fortunes of David's house

are traced in such wise as to keep prominently before us the ever-preserved succession; and in the closing sentences of the Book we are told of one of the royal line still remaining, to whom, though he is still a prisoner in Babylon, mercy and kindness is shewn by the successor of that monarch who had led him away captive. 'What God hath promised to the house of David He has thus fulfilled' is the theme of the Book, and except where political and military affairs illustrate his subject the Compiler concerns himself very little with them. From a comparison with the Chronicles, we find that he has omitted whole sections of such history which lay ready to his hand.

Besides this exposition of the fulfilment of God's promises to David, the writer introduces very few other subjects with any detail, save the histories of Elijah and Elisha. These synchronise with the darkest period of the history of the ten tribes, when Baal-worship had been superadded to the worship of the calves, and they seem to be specially dealt on that it may be made manifest how great was God's long-suffering to Israel, and that His promise to Jeroboam, made in as large terms as that to David (1 Kings xi. 38), was only rendered void by a determined persistence in evil doing.

The Book of Kings, then, is not a history properly so called, but a selection from the historical documents of the nation made with a definite purpose. That the Compiler makes his extracts most faithfully we have many indications, notably that frequently-occurring phrase, 'unto this day,' a phrase true enough when the original documents from which our Compiler drew were written, but altogether inexact in B.C. 562, and only preserved because of the entire faithfulness to his copy of him who made the extracts. And the indications of such faithfulness are of the utmost importance when we come to estimate other characteristics of the Book.

The most important question of this kind which arises concerns the relation of the Book of Kings to the Pentateuch. In seeking to give an answer to such a question we have to remark how thoroughly, in nearly every chapter, the thread and tissue of the narrative is interwoven with the thoughts and phraseology

of the Books of Moses. Such a chapter as that which contains Solomon's dedication prayer is largely expressed in the words of Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Had that chapter stood alone it might have been ascribed to some later writer familiar with the language of the Mosaic books, and if those books or a large portion of them were of late composition, the dedication prayer might also be set down as of late date. But it is not one single chapter which reechoes the Mosaic diction, resemblances of a like kind exist throughout in considerable abundance. And it is hard to believe that the Compiler of Kings, taking in hand documents which existed long before his day, some as far back as the time of Solomon himself, changed their whole character by introducing language, which, according to some, was not existent before the days of king Josiah. The work is not of such a patchwork character.

We cannot read the long address of David to Solomon to 'be strong and keep the charge of the Lord, and to walk in his ways, &c.' (1 Kings ii. 2, 3), or Solomon's injunction concerning Joab's death 'that it should take away the innocent blood' (ii. 31), or the same king's description of his people, 'one which God had chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude' (iii. 8), without feeling that the thoughts and language of Numbers, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy were very familiar to writers of these chapters, chapters which are due in all probability in their substance not to the Compiler of the Books of Kings, but to Nathan the seer, Ahijah the Shilonite and Iddo the seer, quoted (2 Chron. ix. 29) as the several authorities for the records of Solomon's reign.

Again in such a history as that of the trial and execution of Naboth, the whole narrative carries us back to the laws, manners and customs which have their rise in the Books of Moses. So too do the frequent phrases which occur of such a kind as that 'the eyes and heart of God shall be perpetually upon His house'; that offending Israel 'shall be a proverb and a byword among all people, so that men shall say, Why hath the Lord done thus unto this land'; that Israel shall not intermarry with the heathen, 'Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come

in to you for surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.' Again that proverbial phrase occurring several times over 'him that is shut up and left in Israel' has its source in Deuteronomy (xxxii. 36), whence also comes the phrase 'to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger *with their vanities*.' Allusions to the feast of the new moon (2 Kings iv. 23); to the meal offerings in the temple (2 Kings iii. 20); to the money of the guilt offerings and of the sin offerings as something which by the law belonged to the priests (2 Kings xii. 16), all bring to mind the words of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers, where these regulations are recorded. So too with the recital of the idolatrous practices of Ahaz (2 Kings xvi.). It is entirely couched in the expressions which are found in the book of Deuteronomy, while that solemn enumeration (2 Kings xvii.) of those offences for which the northern kingdom was destroyed abounds with the phrases which are to be met with in Exodus, Leviticus and Deuteronomy. If the faithfulness of the Compiler is to be accepted as equally displayed throughout his whole work, and there is no reason why it should not be, the records from which he drew had been written by those to whom the language found in our present Books of Moses was abundantly familiar. That such a position may be accepted it is not necessary to suppose that those Books existed exactly as we have them, in the days of David and Solomon, Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, but that there did exist something very analogous thereto, something which the redactors after the Captivity without difficulty cast into the present form.

These considerations are of much importance when we come to enquire concerning the character of that Book of the Law which we are told was found by Hilkiah in the house of the Lord while the restoration of the temple was in progress in the reign of Josiah. That the book which was found was simply the Book of Deuteronomy, an opinion held by many, is a view which appears somewhat untenable. It is spoken of as 'the Book of the Law' or 'this Book of the covenant,' a phrase used always to designate the Books of Moses as a whole, but not a portion of them or any single book by itself. Deuteronomy

was included in what was found, for the threats which are written in that book are expressly cited as making a deep impression upon the mind of Josiah, but Exodus must also have been included, for nowhere else are there found those complete and precise directions for the passover, which Josiah must have had before him when he arranged for its celebration in all its primitive order.

Josiah expressed no surprise when he was told that 'the Book of the Law' had been found, and the language of Huldah, when she was applied to, is that of one who was quite conscious of the existence of such a book. The name may have been applied at different times in the history of Israel to a collection varying in bulk, and perhaps in some portions of its form, but it was the name which was applied from the first to the laws of the people as a whole, and not to a single portion. There had existed long before Josiah's day something which had passed under the name of 'the Law of the Lord.' Its directions were given to the people by the priests, and we need not assume that the number of copies which existed was very great. But copies did exist or Huldah would not have spoken as she did, and it is an evidence that Hilkiah's book was not an invention of the priestly body in Josiah's day, that no voice is raised to dispute what is read from it, no word is uttered that points to it as something hitherto unknown. In the days of Hezekiah there cannot fail to have existed a copy to which that reforming king could refer, though his passover-celebration seems to have been less complete than that of Josiah, and it is likely that the men of Hezekiah (Prov. xxv. 1) who gathered the Proverbs of Solomon were also employed in making copies of the Law as it then existed. But in the evil days which followed Hezekiah's reign, there was inducement enough offered for those who had a knowledge of such a book to cast it away, and the temple and its services were so far abolished or neglected as to account very naturally for the disappearance of a copy which had been laid up in the house of the Lord. Josiah may never have heard more than the directions which the priests gave concerning the worship of Jehovah in the temple,

and an exact recital of the words of the covenant of God with Israel may have been entirely strange to him. What Hilkiah brought to him was an authoritative record of what hitherto he had received as tradition. The tradition had been incomplete. When the king learns the Law in greater fulness, he trembles with dread lest the curses therein denounced should fall upon him and his land because of inadequacy of the service which they had been rendering.

'The Book of the Law,' or 'the Book of the Covenant' was an ancient name and not an invention of Josiah's time. The contents of that which was so called need not be supposed to have been always the same, but to have been increased in amount by the ordinances which developed from the most primitive code. What was discovered at this time was a copy of that which passed by the name 'Book of the Law' in the days of Hezekiah or even later, and the abundance of the quotations from the Books of Moses, and the great likeness to the language of those Books in the phraseology of our present Book of Kings, are evidence as good as can be desired of the existence of what we now know as Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, in some form or other all through the times of the kingdom.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

Solomon king over the whole nation, 1015—975.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B.C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
17	**Rehoboam**	975	**Jeroboam** *Jeroboam builds Penuel* (1 Kings xii. 25)	22
	Shishak plunders Jerusalem (1 Kings xiv. 25—26)			
3	**Abijam** (18th year of Jeroboam) 1 Kings xv. 1; 2 Chron. xiii. 1	957		
41	**Asa** (20th year of Jeroboam) 1 Kings xv. 9	955		
		954	**Nadab** (2nd year of Asa) 1 Kings xv. 25	2
		953	**Baasha** (3rd year of Asa) 1 Kings xv. 28	24
	War with Zerah the Ethiopian (2 Chron. xiv. 9)			
			War against Judah (2 Chron. xvi. 1)	
	Asa's alliance with Benhadad I. (1 Kings xv. 18)			
		930	**Elah** (26th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 8	2
		929	**Zimri** (27th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 10	7 dys.
		929	**Omri** *War between Omri and Tibni 4 years*[1] (1 Kings xvi. 21)	12
		925	**Omri** *unopposed* (31st year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 23 *Victories over the Moabites.* *Omri builds Samaria* (1 Kings xvi. 24) *Samaria invaded by the Syrians* (1 Kings xx. 34)	
		918	**Ahab** (38th year of Asa) 1 Kings xvi. 29 *Ahab marries Jezebel, princess of Zidon* (1 Kings xvi. 31)	22

1 The duration of this war, about 4 years, must be included in the 12 years of Omri's reign (1 Kings xvi. 23). Otherwise Ahab's accession could not be in the 38th year of Asa.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
25	**Jehoshaphat** (4th year of Ahab) 1 Kings xxii. 41	914		
			Benhadad II. attacks Samaria twice and is defeated (1 Kings xx. 29)	
			Battle at Ramoth-Gilead. Ahab slain (1 Kings xxii. 37)	
	Philistines and Arabians tributary to Judah (2 Chron. xvii. 11)	898	**Ahaziah** (17th year of Jehoshaphat) 1 Kings xxii. 51	2
			Moab regains its lost territory[2]	
		897	**Jehoram** (18th[3] year of Jehoshaphat) 2 Kings iii. 1	12
			War against Mesha king of Moab (2 Kings iii. 4—27)	
8	**Joram** (5th year of Jehoram) 2 Kings viii. 16	893		
	Revolt of Edom and Libnah (2 Kings viii. 22)			
	Judah ravaged by Philistines and Arabians (2 Chron. xxi. 17)			
1	**Ahaziah**[4] (12th year of Jehoram) 2 Kings viii. 25	885		
			Defence of Ramoth Gilead (2 Kings ix 14)	
	Ahaziah slain by Jehu	884	*Jehoram slain by Jehu*[5]	
6	**Athaliah** (2 Kings xi. 3)	884	**Jehu** (2 Kings x. 36)	28
	The temple desecrated (2 Chron. xxiv. 7)			
40	**Joash** (7th year of Jehu) 2 Kings xi. 4; xii. 1	878		
			Israel smitten by Syria (2 Kings x. 32)	
		856	**Jehoahaz** (23rd year of Joash) 2 Kings xiii. 1	17[6]
	Hazael threatens Jerusalem (2 Kings xii. 17)			
			Continued oppression of the Syrians (2 Kings xiii. 22)	
		842	**Jehoash** (37th year of Joash) 2 Kings xiii. 10	16

2 This appears to be the time to which the conquests recorded on the Moabite stone are to be referred. The places had been won by Israel in the reign of Omri.

3 There are 3 statements concerning the commencement of the reign of Jehoram king of Israel. He is said (2 Kings i. 17) to have begun to reign in the second year of Joram, king of Judah; then (2 Kings viii. 16) in the fifth year before Joram; and thirdly, as noted above in the Table, in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat. On the attempts to bring these 3 dates into accord, see the notes on the several verses.

4 In 2 Kings ix. 29, the date is given as the 11th year of Jehoram. But such a variation may be accounted for by the Jewish mode of reckoning regnal years.

5 The period embraced between the accession of Jeroboam and the death of Jehoram is 91 years (975–884). That the totals of years ascribed to the kings amounts to a larger number than this is due to the counting of one and the same year as the final year of one reign and the initial year of the next. These totals are 95 for Judah and 98 for Israel. The total for Israel is greater than that for Judah because of the greater number of the accessions and the consequently greater number of the double reckonings. But if the three reigns reckoned as 2 years each in Israel, be counted, as they really were, for only one year each, the totals on both sides become the same.

6 From the 23rd year of Joash to the 37th year makes the reign of Jehoahaz to be little more than 14 years, while the length of the reign of Jehoash, from the 37th year of Joash to the 15th of Amaziah, would be somewhat more than 16 years. If we take the excess in one case to supplement the defect in the other the total time will be not far from correct.

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Amaziah**[7] (2nd year of Jehoash) 2 Kings xiv. 1	841		
			Death of Elisha (2 Kings xiii. 14)	
			Some territory recovered from Syria (2 Kings xiii. 25)	
	Edom smitten by Judah (2 Kings xiv. 7)			
	Defeat of Amaziah at Beth-shemesh (2 Kings xiv. 13)			
		826	**Jeroboam II.** (15th year of Amaziah) 2 Kings xiv. 23	41[8]
52	**Azariah**[9] (27th[?] year of Jeroboam) 2 Kings xv. 1—2	811		
			Jeroboam recovers Damascus and Hamath (2 Kings xiv. 25)	
		773	**Zechariah** (38th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 8	½
		772	**Shallum** (39th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 13	1½
		772	**Menahem** (39th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 17	10
			Pul, king of Assyria, comes against Israel	
			Menahem becomes vassal of Assyria (2 Kings xv. 19)	
	Azariah towards the close of his reign is a leper			
		761	**Pekahiah** (50th year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 23	2
		759	**Pekah** (52nd year of Azariah) 2 Kings xv. 27	20[10]
16	**Jotham** (2nd year of Pekah) 2 Kings xv. 32, 33	758		
16	**Ahaz** (17th year of Pekah) 2 Kings xvi. 1	742		
			Pekah and Rezin king of Damascus attack Jerusalem	
	Ahaz seeks help from Assyria (2 Kings xvi. 7)			
			Pekah's kingdom attacked by Tiglathpileser	
		730	**Hoshea** (12th year of Ahaz) 2 Kings xvii. 1	9
			Shalmaneser attacks Israel	
			Hoshea treats with So king of Egypt	
			Second attack of Shalmaneser	

7 Amaziah lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash (2 Kings xiv. 17).

8 Between the 15th year of Amaziah who reigned 29 years and the 38th of Azariah must be a period of about 52 or 53 years. Either the 41 years of text is wrong, or there was some interregnum of 11 or 12 years.

9 There is some error in this date. For Amaziah began to reign in the 2nd year of Jehoash. Jehoash reigned 16 years. So he lived about 14 years contemporary with Amaziah. The latter lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash. Thus his whole reign was 29 years. Now in the 15th year of Amaziah began Jeroboam II. to reign. Hence Amaziah must have died, and Azariah succeeded in the 14th or 15th year of Jeroboam.

10 From the 52nd year of Azariah to the 12th year of Ahaz we have 28 years at least for the reigns of Jotham and part of Ahaz. The reign of Pekah must therefore have been longer than 20 years if Hoshea immediately succeeded him. That there is some error in connexion with the dates of Pekah and Jotham is apparent from 2 Kings xv. 30—32

Reigns years	JUDAH	B. C.	ISRAEL	Reigns years
29	**Hezekiah** (3rd year of Hoshea) 2 Kings xviii. 1	726		
	Reformation of Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 4)			
			Sargon succeeds Shalmaneser	
		721	*Samaria taken* (6th year of Hezekiah) 2 Kings xviii. 10 [11]	
	Samaria taken in the 6th year of king Hezekiah	721		
	Sennacherib invades Judah			
	Destruction of the Assyrian army			
	Hezekiah's sickness			
	Babylonian embassy to Jerusalem			
55	**Manasseh** (2 Kings xxi. 1)	697		
	Manasseh carried captive to Babylon (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11)			
2	**Amon** (2 Kings xxi. 19)	642		
31	**Josiah** (2 Kings xxii. 1)	640		
	Restoration of the temple			
	Finding of the book of the Law			
	Abolition of all idolatry			
	Great celebration of the Passover			
	Pharaoh-necoh comes against Assyria			
	Josiah slain at Megiddo			
¼	**Jehoahaz** (2 Kings xxiii. 31)	609		
	Pharaoh-necoh carries Jehoahaz captive (2 Kings xxiii. 33)			
11	**Jehoiakim** (2 Kings xxiii. 36)	609		
	Jehoiakim tributary to Egypt (2 Kings xxiii. 35)			
	Afterwards tributary to Assyria (2 Kings xxiv. 1)			
	Judah attacked by Chaldæans, Syrians, Moabites and Ammonites			
¼	**Jehoiachin** (2 Kings xxiv. 8)	598		
	Egyptians driven back by the Babylonians (2 Kings xxiv. 7)			
	Jehoiachin taken captive to Babylon (2 Kings xxiv. 12)			
11	**Zedekiah** (2 Kings xxiv. 18)	598		
	Jerusalem besieged by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings xxv. 1)	589		
	Capture and destruction of Jerusalem	587		
	Gedaliah appointed governor (2 Kings xxv. 22)			
	The residue of the Jews flee unto Egypt (2 Kings xxv. 26)			
	Jehoiachin kindly treated by Evil-Merodach	562		

11 The period from the accession of Jehu to the captivity of the 10 tribes embraces 163 years. The total of the regnal years of the kings of Judah amounts to 165, a difference easily introduced by the counting the same year twice over at the end of a reign and the beginning of another. But the regnal years assigned to the kings of Israel are little more than 143. Thus it is clear that about 20 years must be added, and this accords with the necessity seen above of giving 12 years more between Jeroboam II. and Zechariah, and 8 years more between Pekah and Hoshea.

THE FIRST BOOK

OF THE

KINGS.

THE

FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED,

THE THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

Now king David was old *and* stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he gat no heat. 1

Ch. I. 1—4. David's Feeble Age. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Now*] The Hebrew has only the conjunction usually rendered *And*. This sentence is not to be regarded as the commencement of a new history, but a continuation of what has been told in 2 Samuel. In Hebrew MSS. 1 and 2 Kings form but one book, as do also 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. The division was first made in the LXX. which Jerome followed, and it was introduced in the printed Hebrew Bibles by Daniel Bomberg. The LXX. however treats these books as so closely connected with Samuel that the four books are all named alike (*βασιλείων α. β. γ. δ.*). They are so catalogued also in Origen's list of the Canonical Books (Euseb. *H. E.* VI. 25), and in Jerome's *Prologus Galeatus*. But we shall have occasion to point out some matters (e.g. the worship on the high places) which were viewed in a different light by the compiler of these later books from that in which they are regarded in the books of Samuel.

The two books fall naturally into three sections. (1) The reign of Solomon, 1 Kings i.—xi. (2) The history of two kingdoms after their separation, till the overthrow of the northern kingdom, 1 Kings xii.—2 Kings xvii. (3) The history of the kingdom of Judah from the Assyrian to the Babylonish Captivity, 2 Kings xviii.—xxv.

king David was old] The circumstances recorded in this passage must have happened when the feeble king had taken to his bed. By comparing 2 Sam. v. 4, 5, with 1 Kings ii. 11, we arrive very nearly at the age given by Josephus (*Ant.* VII. 15. 2) who says David was seventy years old when he died.

stricken in years] Rendered literally on the margin 'entered into days.'

they covered him with clothes] i.e. With bed-clothes; just as in 1 Sam. xix. 13 where A.V. has 'with a cloth.' The word is however most frequently used of garments for wear.

2 Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought
for my lord the king a young virgin: and let her stand
before the king, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in
3 thy bosom, that my lord the king may get heat. So they
sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel,
and found Abishag a Shunammite, and brought her to the
4 king. And the damsel *was* very fair, and cherished the
king, and ministered to him: but the king knew her not.

2. *his servants*] The word, though primarily applied to those who were occupied in servile work, had come by this time to be used regularly of those who were about a royal person, and in such a position as to venture on giving him counsel. Josephus (*Ant.* VII. 15. 3) says they were the king's physicians. (Cf. Gen. l. 2.)

Let there be sought] Literally 'Let them seek.' This kind of variation is frequent in the A.V. for the sake of the English; as also the personal form of a sentence, put where the Hebrew verb is impersonal. Thus the last clause in verse 1 is literally 'and it grew not warm to him.' As such literal renderings are very often noticed on the margin, no special mention will hereafter be made of them.

a young virgin] This device, whereby it was thought to communicate vital heat from a young frame to an old one, was adopted by the advice of physicians long after David's time. See Bacon, *Hist. Vitæ et Mortis*, Medicamina ad longævitatem IX. 25.

and let her stand before the king] This phrase is used of those who serve or minister to another. Thus Deut. i. 38, Joshua the minister of Moses is said to 'stand before him.' It seems clear from the language of Solomon (1 Kings ii. 22) that Abishag was to be counted as one of the wives of David. Polygamy was not at this time confined to kings like David and Solomon, but was practised by other Israelites, as is shewn by the history of Elkanah (1 Sam. i. 2).

3. *a fair damsel*] Such as might be fitted to be one of the royal wives. A similar direction is given when Vashti has been deposed, and a new queen is to be sought for Ahasuerus (Esther ii. 2).

all the coasts] In the English of the Bible this word has no necessary reference to sea-board land, as it has in our modern use, but often signifies, as here, *borders, territories*.

Abishag a Shunammite] The Hebrew has '*the* Shunammite', as though she either was already, or from subsequent events became, well known. She was a native of Shunem, a city belonging to the tribe of Issachar and lying to the north of Jezreel and of Mt Gilboa (see Josh. xix. 18; 1 Sam. xxviii. 4). The Syriac and Arabic read *Sulamite* (cf. Cant. vi. 13).

4. *cherished the king*] Being always at hand to perform, as his nurse, such duties as the weak condition of king David needed.

knew her not] These words seem added to explain how it came to pass that Adonijah afterwards could ask her for his wife. (1 Kings ii. 17.)

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, I will be king: and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. And his father had not displeased him at any time in saying, Why hast thou done so? and he also *was* a very goodly *man;* and *his mother* bare him after Absalom. And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest: and they

5 6 7

5—10. ADONIJAH ATTEMPTS TO MAKE HIMSELF KING. (Not in Chronicles.)

5. *Adonijah, the son of Haggith*] He seems now to have been the eldest of David's living sons. See the list of them 2 Sam. iii. 2—5. Amnon and Absalom we know were dead, and of the second son, Chileab (called Daniel 1 Chron. iii. 1), we have no notice in Scripture, so that he seems to have died young. Adonijah stands fourth in the list; of his mother's parentage or connexion no mention is made.

chariots and horsemen &c.] Compare the similar conduct of Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 1) at the time of his conspiracy against his father. The words refer not to the preparation of an armament for war, but to a kingly retinue which should attend him wherever he went. The *runners* were a body-guard, and the word is applied (1 Kings xiv. 27) to those guards who kept the door of the king's house. See note there. By such a step Adonijah let his intention be known and found out who were likely to be on his side.

6. *had not displeased him at any time*] Had never administered a rebuke whatever wrong act he might have done. We may almost judge that Absalom was in like manner a spoilt child, brought under no correction.

a very goodly man] A fine and commanding figure was no small recommendation for an aspirant to a throne. Compare the account of Saul's personal appearance (1 Sam. ix. 2).

and his mother *bare him after Absalom*] The Hebrew has 'and she bare him &c.,' the italics *his mother* being added in A.V. to mark that the verb in the original is feminine. The same device is adopted in Num. xxvi. 59. But the English of the A.V. in the present passage might be taken to mean that Absalom and Adonijah were both sons of Haggith, whereas Absalom's mother (2 Sam. iii. 3) was Maacah, daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. It is better to render **and he was born**, thus avoiding any ambiguity.

7. *Joab the son of Zeruiah*] Zeruiah was David's sister, and Joab the eldest of her three sons, and a man of much authority and influence during David's reign. He became captain of the host (as we should say, commander in chief) after the conquest of Jebus (1 Chron. xi. 6), and served David faithfully in the main until this time. But he held David's secret in the matter of Uriah, and accordingly defied him, when it suited his purpose. His greatest offence against the king was the slaughter of Absalom, whom he killed in defiance of David's order. (2 Sam. xviii. 14.)

Abiathar the priest] This was the son of that Ahimelech who, with

8 following Adonijah helped *him.* But Zadok the priest,
and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet,
and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty *men* which *belonged* to
9 David, were not with Adonijah. And Adonijah slew sheep

all his family except Abiathar, was put to death by Saul, when Doeg the Edomite informed him that the shewbread from the tabernacle at Nob had been given to David (1 Sam. xxi., xxii.). Abiathar then escaped to David and had remained with him through all his troubles until this time, when, it may be through jealousy of Zadok, he sided with Adonijah against Solomon.

they following Adonijah helped him] Lit. 'They helped after Adonijah.' Joab had his own thoughts about the orders which David might leave at his death, and Abiathar his jealousy, and both no doubt felt that by their conduct, if it were successful, they were making Adonijah for evermore their debtor.

8. *But Zadok the priest*] He was the son of Ahitub, and descended from Eleazar, the son of Aaron. He joined David after the death of Saul, and there were thus two priests, perhaps one being highpriest and the other second priest, through the whole of David's reign. Zadok's duties appear (1 Chron. xvi. 39) to have been at the Tabernacle in Gibeon, and Abiathar had charge of the ark in Jerusalem. But in consequence of the events described in this chapter Abiathar was thrust out of his office and banished to Anathoth, and Zadok became the sole highpriest.

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada] This man, though of the tribe of Levi, became captain of David's body-guard of Cherethites and Pelethites (see below on verse 38), and was made, when Joab was dead, commander in chief of Solomon's army.

Nathan the prophet] He was prominent in David's reign, giving the king advice concerning the building of the Temple, bringing God's rebuke after David's adultery and the message of forgiveness when he had repented. He appears also in connexion with the birth of Solomon and now as the adviser and helper of Bath-sheba. After Solomon was proclaimed king we hear no more of Nathan.

and Shimei] There is a person so called mentioned afterwards as one of the twelve officers who provided victuals for king Solomon and his household. But whether that be the Shimei here mentioned there is no means of deciding. It was conjectured by Ewald that it was another way of writing the name of Shimeah, David's brother.

and Rei] Rei is not mentioned elsewhere, and there is nothing to guide us to any opinion concerning his identity. Several conjectures have been made, but none that deserves much attention.

the mighty men *which* belonged *to David*] Of these champions a list is given 2 Sam. xxiii. 8—39, with which may be compared 1 Chron. xi. 10—47.

9. *Adonijah slew* &c.] The verb is that which is constantly used for *sacrificing*. And here there was no doubt intended to be a certain solemnity connected with the feast held in honour of Adonijah's proclamation. Beside its use in this chapter, where it is rendered 'to

and oxen and fat cattle by the stone of Zoheleth, which *is* by En-rogel, and called all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants: but Nathan the pro- 10
phet, and Benaiah, and the mighty *men*, and Solomon his brother, he called not.

Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of 11
Solomon, saying, Hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign, and David our lord knoweth *it* not? Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee 12
counsel, that thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon. Go and get thee in unto king David, 13

slay' in verses 19 and 25, the verb is only so translated in 1 Kings xix. 21 of Elisha's slaughter of his oxen, and 2 Kings xxiii. 20 of Josiah's slaughter of the priests of the high places, both which acts partook of the nature of a solemn sacrifice.

by the stone of Zoheleth, which is *by En-rogel*] The name En-rogel signifies the 'fountain of the fuller,' a name probably given to it from the use to which the water was applied. They washed by stamping on the clothes with the *foot* (Heb. *regel*). From the other places where it is mentioned (Josh. xv. 7; xviii. 16; 2 Sam. xvii. 17) it is clear that En-rogel lay on the south-east of Jerusalem, and formed one of the land-marks between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Attempts have been made to identify it with the 'fountain of Job (or Joab),' which is situate at the junction of the valleys of Kedron and Hinnom; while others are in favour of the 'fountain of the Virgin,' as it is now called, from whence comes the water to the pool of Siloam. It is in favour of the latter, that women still resort to it as a place for washing clothes. Of the 'stone of Zoheleth' we have no notice but in this passage.

10. *Solomon his brother*] Doubtless Adonijah was well acquainted with David's intention that Solomon should be his successor. But in those early times in most countries but especially in the East the right of hereditary succession was not thought of, the reigning monarch selecting for his successor that member of his family who was most in favour or who seemed most fit to rule. Moreover, in this case, Solomon was not the son of the first wife.

called] i.e. invited to be present at the feast which he was about to make.

11—14. NATHAN'S COUNSEL TO BATH-SHEBA. (Not in Chronicles.)

11. *Bath-sheba*] She who had before been the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Nathan's zeal for Solomon's cause may be well understood, because it was by his message (2 Sam. xii. 25) that Solomon was specially called the 'beloved of the Lord.'

doth reign] As though the work were already completed and Adonijah already assured of the throne.

12. *save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon*] Because it has ever been the policy of an Oriental usurper, as soon as ever he

and say unto him, Didst not thou, my lord O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? why
14 then doth Adonijah reign? Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king, I also will come in after thee, and con-
15 firm thy words. And Bath-sheba went in unto the king into the chamber: and the king was very old; and Abishag the
16 Shunammite ministered unto the king. And Bath-sheba bowed, and did obeisance unto the king. And the king
17 said, What wouldest thou? And she said unto him, My lord, thou swarest by the LORD thy God unto thine handmaid, *saying*, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and
18 he shall sit upon my throne. And now behold, Adonijah

had power enough, to put out of the way those who were likely to oppose him, and so make his throne more secure.

13. *Didst not thou...swear unto thine handmaid*] She uses terms of great humility, even though she be pleading the king's former solemn promise. We have no record of the oath to which Bath-sheba alludes, but we may be sure that the king had imparted to her the promise which God had made to him that Solomon should be his successor in the kingdom.

The Hebrew particle כִּי, which is here and in verse 30 translated 'assuredly', seems often not intended for anything more than a mark of quotation. Like the Greek ὅτι, when it stands before a direct quotation, it should be left in most cases untranslated. In 1 Kings xi. 22 it is rendered 'but', which would be better omitted.

shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne] The fuller phrase seems intended to imply that Solomon should be in all respects the equal of his father. The pronoun 'he' is emphatically expressed in the original as also in verses 24, 30 and 35. In each case the force is 'he and no other.'

14. *and confirm thy words*] Lit. 'fill up' thy words. This Nathan could most fitly do because he knew of the expressions of God's will which had been communicated unto David. Thus he could dwell more fully than Bath-sheba on the king's previous intentions, and knowing better than she what was going on around Adonijah could assure David that it was no imaginary alarm.

15—21. BATH-SHEBA BEFORE KING DAVID. (Not in Chronicles.)

15. *and the king was very old*] This sentence is in explanation why Bath-sheba went into the bedchamber of the king. David was too feeble to go forth, and those who would see him must come there for audience.

16. *bowed and did obeisance*] After the fashion of Orientals in the presence of a monarch.

17. *and he shall sit*] The pronoun in the original is emphatically expressed.

reigneth; and now, my lord the king, thou knowest *it* not:
and he hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep in abun- 19
dance, and hath called all the sons of the king, and Abiathar
the priest, and Joab the captain of the host: but Solomon
thy servant hath he not called. And thou, my lord O king, 20
the eyes of all Israel *are* upon thee, that *thou* shouldest tell
them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after
him. Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the 21
king shall sleep with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon
shall be *counted* offenders. And lo, while she yet talked 22
with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. And they 23
told the king, saying, Behold Nathan the prophet. And
when he was come in before the king, he bowed himself
before the king with his face to the ground. And Nathan 24
said, My lord O king, hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign

18. *Adonijah reigneth*] i.e. Is being set up for king, and will be accepted, unless some word from David go forth to prevent it. With the commander-in-chief, and the highpriest Abiathar on his side Adonijah's following might well seem powerful.

and now, my lord the king, thou knowest it *not*] The Hebrew words for *thou* אתה and *now* עתה vary only in one letter, and in sound are very much alike. Hence it has come to pass that in this verse and verse 20 there is a confusion; and here in some copies *thou* is put instead of *now*: 'and thou, my lord...knowest it not.'

20. *And thou, my lord*, &c.] Here the variation is the other way, and *now* is read for *thou*. Both these changes seem to render the sentences more emphatic, especially as in this verse the queen is coming to the close of her argument and wishes to move David to take action in the matter at once.

21. *counted offenders*] The Heb. word is literally 'sinners.' Bath-sheba does not go so far as Nathan, and say that the lives of herself and her son are in peril, but leaves the king to think what the lot of those offenders would be whom Adonijah knew to have aspired to the throne.

22—27. NATHAN CONFIRMS THE STATEMENTS OF BATH-SHEBA. (Not in Chronicles.)

22. *Nathan the prophet also came in*] Apparently at first into an outer room, whence he was announced to king David, and Bath-sheba went out before his coming into the bedchamber. She was clearly not present during Nathan's address to the king. See vers. 28.

24. *hast thou said*] There is nothing in the Hebrew to mark the question. It must have been indicated by the tone. It would come with much force from Nathan, as he knew all the circumstances of God's promise that Solomon should be king after David. He shews by his language in verse 27 that any change in the plans for the suc-

25 after me, and he shall sit upon my throne? For he is gone
down *this* day, and hath slain oxen and fat cattle and sheep
in abundance, and hath called all the king's sons, and the
captains of the host, and Abiathar the priest; and behold,
they eat and drink before him, and say, God save king
26 Adonijah. But me, *even* me thy servant, and Zadok the
priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and thy servant
27 Solomon, hath he not called. Is this thing done by my
lord the king, and thou hast not shewed *it* unto thy servant,
who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?
28 Then king David answered and said, Call me Bath-sheba.
And she came into the king's presence, and stood before
29 the king. And the king sware, and said, *As* the LORD
30 liveth, that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even

cession should not have been made without his knowledge. After the divine messages which had been sent to the king through Nathan, the prophet's relation to David was different from that of other subjects.

25. *For he is gone down*] The site of the fountain, near which Adonijah's banquet was made, was in the valley below Jerusalem.

God save king Adonijah] The Heb. is 'Let king Adonijah live' i.e. live long and happily; and similarly in all cases where A. V. has 'God save, &c.'

27. *shewed* it *unto thy servant*] There is a various reading, 'thy servants,' but the A. V. gives the better sense. There was a special reason why Nathan should know of all that was done in respect of the succession, which did not apply to the rest of David's court.

28—40. DAVID CAUSES SOLOMON TO BE PROCLAIMED AND ANOINTED KING. (Not in Chronicles.)

28. *Call me Bath-sheba*] The queen had not been present during Nathan's interview, and no doubt both she and the prophet desired to appear as much as possible independent of each other in their tidings.

29. *And the king sware*] i.e. Solemnly renewed the oath which he had before (see ver. 13) made unto Bath-sheba.

As *the Lord liveth*] The expression is equivalent to 'As surely as the Lord liveth,' though in the Hebrew there is no word for *as*. God is frequently spoken of as 'the living God' and the idea in this form of asseveration seems to be this, 'the Lord is living, of that there is no doubt, and as certainly shall that come to pass which is prefaced by this solemn assertion.'

that hath redeemed, &c.] David employs exactly the same words (in Hebrew) in 2 Sam. iv. 9, previous to the punishment of Baanah and Rechab for the murder of Ishbosheth. And it is not without reason that he thinks of the termination of his distresses in connexion with Solomon, for the birth of that son marked the time when he became at peace not only with men but with God.

as I sware unto thee by the LORD God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day. Then Bath-sheba bowed *with her* face *to* the earth, and did reverence to the king, and said, Let my lord king David live for ever. 31

And king David said, Call me Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. And they came before the king. The king also said unto them, Take with you the servants of your lord, and cause Solomon my son to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon: and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him there king over Israel: and blow ye with the 32 33 34

30. *the Lord God of Israel*] R.V. 'the Lord, the God of Israel,' as demanded by the Hebrew construction, here and elsewhere.

31. *Let my lord king David live for ever*] On this common Oriental hyperbole, compare Dan. ii. 4, iii. 9, v. 10, &c. It was the common Eastern formula. Bath-sheba implied thereby that in her zeal for Solomon's succession there was no desire for David's death but only that the promise made to her concerning Solomon should not be broken.

32. *Zadok the priest*] Who must anoint king Solomon, and it is probably with this thought that David names him first.

and Nathan the prophet] Who had gone aside when Bath-sheba was called.

33. *Take with you the servants of your lord*] Judging from a similar order given by David (2 Sam. xx. 6, 7) these words imply a considerable body of armed men. For there it is said that the servants comprised Joab's men, and the Cherethites and the Pelethites and all the mighty men. Where Joab was of the other side it was needful to be prepared for fighting.

upon mine own mule] To ride in the chariot or on the beast which carried the king was a mark of special distinction. So Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 43) made Joseph 'ride in the second chariot which he had.' In like manner Jehonadab was taken (2 Kings x. 16) into Jehu's chariot, and Haman named as a special mark of honour that a man should be set on 'the horse that the king rideth upon' (Esther vi. 8).

bring him down to Gihon] From the direction here given this place must have been in the lower ground near Jerusalem. This agrees with the mention made of it in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 14, where it is said to be in the valley, by which word is probably meant the torrent bed of the brook Kedron, so that Gihon would be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the east of Jerusalem. Both parties chose a place where there was water (see *v.* 9) for the anointing. Does this indicate that there was some purification connected with the act? At a later period there was an 'upper' and 'lower' pool at Gihon (2 Chron. xxxii. 30).

34. *anoint him there*] The anointing was the most solemn portion of

35 trumpet, and say, God save king Solomon. Then ye shall
come up after him, that he may come and sit upon my
throne; for he shall be king in my stead: and I have ap-
36 pointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. And
Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king, and said,
37 Amen: the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. As
the LORD hath been with my lord the king, even so be he

the ceremonies connected with the installation of a new king. We only read of its being done on some very marked occasions. Thus Saul, the first king, was anointed (1 Sam. x. 1), and David, the king of God's own choice (1 Sam. xvi. 13); also when God orders the prophet Elijah to make provision for a new succession in Israel, Jehu is to be anointed (1 Kings xix. 16), which was done when the proper time came (2 Kings ix. 3, 6); so Joash after his preservation was anointed by Jehoiada (2 Chron. xxiii. 11). But though unmentioned it may have been performed in other cases. For 'anointing' is mentioned even in Jotham's parable (Jud. ix. 8), where the trees will choose them a king. The ceremony is intended to symbolize the outpouring of gifts from above upon the new monarch.

blow ye with the trumpet] Thus did Jehu's companions after his anointing (2 Kings ix. 13); neither anointing nor the blowing of the trumpets has been mentioned in connexion with Adonijah's faction. No doubt they wished to gain strength before making such a public display of what they were doing.

35. *come up after him*] That is, as his supporters and body-guard, just as in verse 7 above, the conspirators 'helped after Adonijah.' Cf. also below, verse 40.

to be ruler over Israel] A better rendering is 'prince'. The title was that given by God specially to those who should lead His people. Thus Saul is first so called (1 Sam. ix. 16. A.V. 'captain' as in 1 Sam. x. 1. In 2 Chron. xi. 22 A.V. has 'ruler,' R.V. 'prince'), then David (1 Sam. xxv. 30, A.V. 'leader'). It is used also of Hezekiah (2 Kings xx. 5), and in Daniel (ix. 25) of Him who was to be greater than all these, 'Messiah the *Prince*.'

36. *and said, Amen*] Expressing as usual a prayer 'So let it be'; but at the same time expressing concurrence with all the king had said and a determination to carry his orders into effect. Thus the word implies also 'So it shall be.' But there is immediately subjoined 'the Lord God of my lord the king *say* so too,' implying that though David might plan and his servants labour for this end it would not be brought about except with God's will. The sentence may be compared with Jeremiah (xxviii. 6), where the words are 'The prophet Jeremiah said, Amen: the Lord *do* so'; a reading which one or two MSS give here, but no doubt only as a gloss.

the Lord God of my lord] R.V. 'the Lord, the God of my lord.' See above on verse 30.

37. *so be he*] i.e. 'So let him be.' The Massoretic note corrects into 'so shall he be,' which makes nonsense of the verse.

with Solomon, and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David. So Zadok the priest, and Nathan 38
the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took a horn of oil out of 39
the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the

make his throne greater than the throne of my lord] No doubt David's faithful servants knew of the large promises which God had made to Solomon already, and that the heart of the king was gladdened at the thought of the future glory of his son (1 Chron. xvii. 11—27). They had therefore no fear of David's anger when they used words such as these. That Solomon's kingdom and grandeur did surpass David's may be seen from the narratives in 1 Kings x. and 2 Chron. ix.

38. *the Cherethites and the Pelethites*] The former of these names is found 1 Sam. xxx. 14 as the name of a people to the south of the Philistines. Hence it has been held by some that the second name, Pelethites, must also be of the same character, and that probably it is connected with the word 'Philistine.' It seems not impossible that David from his early residence in the country of the Philistines may have attached a body of men to him from among those peoples and constituted them his first body-guard (Josephus calls them σωματοφύλακες), which while retaining their old title would after the king's accession be recruited from any of his most trusty supporters. We need not suppose therefore that though called by the old name they were largely composed of aliens. The older interpretations, connecting the words with Hebrew verbs, have been 'executioners and runners'; and the Targum interprets them as 'archers and slingers' and in one place as 'nobles and common soldiers.' They are clearly to be identified with 'the mighty men' mentioned in verse 8 as not being with Adonijah.

39. *a horn of oil*] The Hebrew has the *horn*. The 'holy anointing oil' was no doubt preserved for occasions like this, and for the anointing of the priests. Zadok having the care of the tabernacle at Gibeon (1 Chron. xvi. 39) would have this under his charge. And as Gibeon was 'the great high place' (iii. 4), all that was most sacred would be kept there.

out of the tabernacle] The word here rendered 'tabernacle' is not the same as that so rendered in the passage from 1 Chron. just quoted, and it is advisable to make a distinction between them. The word in this verse is that usually translated, when it does not refer to the sacred dwellingplace of God's glory, by the English 'tent' (Gen. ix. 21 &c.) and it would be well so to render here. In no other passage in Scripture does the word occur of the Divine dwelling-place without some qualifying expression added to it. It is 'the tabernacle of the congregation,' 'the tabernacle of witness,' 'the tabernacle of the Lord.' In all these cases '**Tent**' might well be substituted. This word refers to the external covering of black goats' hair, while the other word implies

trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon.
40 And all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced *with* great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them.
41 And Adonijah and all the guests that *were* with him heard *it* as they had made an end of eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, Wherefore *is this*
42 noise of the city being in an uproar? And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest

the interior, the very dwellingplace of God, and for this 'Tabernacle' might be specially retained.

all the people said] Solomon's anointing was made a public ceremonial, news of what was to be done would go forth during the time that a messenger went to Gibeon for the sacred oil, and thus there seems to have been present not only those whom David had commissioned but a large body of the people of Jerusalem.

40. *piped with pipes*] The LXX. adopting some slight alteration of the Hebrew, renders 'danced in dances.' And Josephus speaks of the people (*Antiq.* VII. 14, 5) as 'dancing and playing on pipes'; thus shewing a desire to combine both readings. That the Israelites were likely to have *pipes* on such an occasion seems probable from 1 Sam. x. 5, where they are enumerated among the instruments used by the company of prophets.

rent with the sound] The Hebrew text implies 'cleaving asunder' and must, if correct, be taken as hyperbolic: that it is correct seems clear from the LXX. which has 'was broken asunder' (ἐῤῥάγη), though a slight change in the letters of the Hebrew (reading תקע for בקע) would give the meaning which the Vulgate has, 'insonuit,' i. e. resounded. Josephus appears thus to have understood the phrase, whatever reading he had, for he writes 'from the multitude of the instruments all the earth and the air resounded.'

41—53. Alarm and submission of Adonijah. (Not in Chronicles.)

41. *as they had made an end of eating*] Such a banquet would naturally last a good while; and if we suppose Nathan to have heard of it as the festivity began, or he even may have known as they left Jerusalem, there will be seen to be time enough for all that is described as done by the supporters of Solomon. For they had no banquet to prepare and eat, but only the religious ceremonial to discharge which marked their master's chosen son for king.

Joab heard] Any preparation against opposition to their action would properly be left to the commander-in-chief, and so he is alert to mark any signs of a commotion. Josephus represents the interruption as coming before the meal was finished.

42. *Jonathan the son of Abiathar*] They had left in the city some who should bring them word of any stir which their doings might cause. Jonathan had discharged the same office of watchman and news-

came: and Adonijah said *unto him*, Come in; for thou *art* a valiant man, and bringest good tidings. And Jonathan 43
answered and said to Adonijah, Verily our lord king David hath made Solomon king. And the king hath sent with 44
him Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule: and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed 45
him king in Gihon: and they are come up from thence rejoicing, so that the city rang again. This *is* the noise that ye have heard. And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of 46
the kingdom. And moreover the king's servants came to 47
bless our lord king David, saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed.

bringer at the time of Absalom's revolt. See 2 Sam. xv. 27 and xvii. 17. But then he was to bring word to David.

a valiant man] Perhaps rather, a **worthy man**. The same word, which is often translated by 'valour,' 'wealth,' 'might,' is also used of any special excellence. Thus Proverbs xii. 4, xxxi. 10 it is used in the description of 'the *virtuous* woman'; also in this chapter, verse 52, we have the word translated *worthy;* and in 1 Chron. ix. 13 it is used of those who were 'very *able* men' for the work of the service of the house of the Lord. In the present case it was not so much a man of valour as of discretion who was needed in the messenger.

and bringest good tidings] The expression is somewhat redundant in the Hebrew, and might be rendered 'bringest good tidings of good'. The same words are thus translated Is. lii. 7.

43. *Verily our lord*, &c.] The adverb implies some such sense as 'Nay but'. Jonathan wishes to say 'It is not as you hoped, but on the contrary Solomon is proclaimed and anointed.' Comp. Gen. xvii. 19, where the word is rendered in A. V. 'indeed,' but the sense is '*Nay but* Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son,' instead of Ishmael being made the hope of thy family.

46. *Solomon sitteth on the throne*] Jonathan had seen the complete ceremony of installation, for on their return from Gihon the aged king had commanded that Solomon should shew himself seated in state on the royal throne.

47. *the king's servants*] i.e. The general public of Jerusalem who gathered themselves to offer congratulations to David on the commencement of the reign of his son. That a son should begin to reign during his father's lifetime was no uncommon occurrence in the East.

the king bowed himself upon the bed] The verb is that commonly used of an act of worship, and the language of the next verse shews that David's bowing was of this nature. He prayed that the good wishes he had just heard might be fulfilled, and thanked God for what

48 And also thus said the king, Blessed *be* the LORD God of
Israel, which hath given *one* to sit on my throne *this* day,
49 mine eyes even seeing *it*. And all the guests that *were* with
Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his
way.

50 And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and
51 went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar. And it
was told Solomon, saying, Behold, Adonijah feareth king
Solomon: for lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the
altar, saying, Let king Solomon swear unto me to day that
52 he will not slay his servant with the sword. And Solomon
said, If he will shew himself a worthy man, there shall not

had already happened. The action and intention is similar to that of Jacob described Gen. xlvii. 31.

48. *the Lord God*] See on verse 30.

given one *to sit*] Of course he means 'one of my own family and the one whom I specially wished.' The LXX. adds here the words 'of my seed' and a like addition is made in some of the other versions. There can however be no misunderstanding of the king's meaning without any such supplement. The king's thankfulness was not for *an* occupier, but for the particular person now put on the throne.

The report brought by Jonathan (vv. 43—48) seems like the language of one who had been a spectator of what he relates. If this were so, we must assume king David to have been carried from his bedchamber into some reception-room where he could listen, as he lay, to the congratulations mentioned in verse 47. The adding on of one particular after another, with the repetition of the same conjunction גַּם = *and also*, is exactly after the style of a messenger in great haste.

50. *caught hold on the horns of the altar*] In his terror Adonijah takes sanctuary, apparently at the altar which had been erected when the ark was brought to Mt. Zion. That an altar was set up there is clear from 2 Sam. vi. 17, 18, where we have an account of the burnt offerings and peace offerings presented there. As this sanctuary was specially under the care of Abiathar, it was natural that Adonijah should go there. It may have been by Abiathar's advice.

The horns of the altar are described Exod. xxvii. 2 seqq. They were wooden projections overlaid with brass. On the occasion of a sacrifice the priest with his finger was to smear them with the blood of the victim (Exod. xxix. 12), and this ceremonial was a sign of atonement (Exod. xxx. 10). Thus the spot to which Adonijah fled was of special sanctity.

51. *Let king Solomon swear unto me to day*] The word translated *to day* signifies rather 'first of all,' i. e. before I will venture to come away from my place of safety. The same word is found twice in the narrative of the sale of Esau's birthright, Gen. xxv. 31, 33. When Esau has asked for pottage, Jacob says "Sell me first of all (A.V. this day) thy birthright" and afterwards "Swear to me first of all."

a hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and 53
they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house.

Now the days of David drew nigh that *he* should die; and 2
he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the 2
earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man;

52. *not a hair of him fall to the earth*] The expression is common and proverbial to express that no harm of any kind shall befall. Cf. 1 Sam. xiv. 45; 2 Sam. xiv. 11.

if wickedness shall be found in him] Josephus gives the sense: 'If he shall again be caught with any new plots.'

53. *and they brought him down from the altar*] The expression refers perhaps to the steps on which Adonijah must have gone up to cling to the sides of the altar, or it may be to the elevation of the whole situation as the altar stood before the ark on Mt. Zion.

bowed himself] The same word as in 47 is used of David's religious reverence. So Adonijah did homage to Solomon as his lord; and by pardoning the chief offender the new king shewed the rest of Adonijah's adherents that they need not despair of forgiveness. Thus he would be most likely to change them from foes to friends.

Ch. II. 1—11. David's last charge to Solomon, and his death. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Now the days of David drew nigh that* he *should die*] According to the narrative of Josephus (*Antiq.* VII. 14, 7) all the events recorded in 1 Chron. xxviii. and xxix. took place in the interval between the first anointing of Solomon and the death of David. There is nothing in those chapters beyond what an aged man might do, especially if he had a brief period of better health, and 1 Chron. xxix. 22 makes special mention of Solomon's second anointing which, like the first, preceded the death of his father.

2. *I go the way of all the earth*] i.e. Of all who live on the earth, viz. to the grave. The same expression is used by Joshua (xxiii. 14), and, though the Hebrew noun is not the same, we may compare Job xvi. 22 'I shall go the way whence I shall not return.'

be thou strong therefore] Compare the oft-repeated injunction to Joshua, Deut. xxxi. 7, 23; Josh. i. 6, 7 &c. The circumstances are not very dissimilar. Moses, soon to be taken away, was giving his charge to his successor (Deut. xxxi. 23), as David to Solomon, and the language is identical. Cf. also 1 Chron. xxii. 13.

shew thyself a man] The age of Solomon at the death of his father cannot be exactly known. He must have been considerably younger than Adonijah, who was the fourth of those six sons born to David before the conquest of Jerusalem (2 Sam. iii. 4). And he may have

3 and keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, *and* his commandments, and his judgements, and his testimonies, as *it is* written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper *in* all that thou doest, and
4 whithersoever thou turnest thyself: that the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not
5 fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel. Moreover

been so young that his father's words mean, 'though a youth in years, yet prove yourself a man in prudence and wisdom.' This is somewhat supported by Solomon's language about himself (1 Kings iii. 7), 'I am but a little child.' But it may also be understood as a general exhortation to exhibit the courage which would be necessary, since a party had been formed in the kingdom for the support of another claimant to the throne.

3. *keep the charge of the Lord*] The word rendered 'charge' here has no connexion with the verb used in verse 1, but is the customary expression in the Book of Numbers for the care and oversight of the Tabernacle and other things committed to the Levites. (See Num. i. 53, iii. 7, 8 &c.) It is used also of other sacred offices and the duties attached thereto. Thus is imported into the word a solemn signification, though in etymology it is connected with the word which precedes it, rendered 'keep'.

to keep his statutes, and *his commandments, and his judgements*] These words appear to refer to the three portions of the divine law, the ceremonial, the moral, and the judicial ordinances revealed by God in the Mosaic code; while *testimonies* may be interpreted of those evidences of God's will towards man which are made clear by His dealings with bygone generations. Thus God in His word bears witness to Himself.

as it is *written in the law of Moses*] The allusion is to Deut. xvii. 18—20, where the king, in time to come, is bidden to keep a copy of the Law, and to study it, that so his days may be prolonged.

4. *that the Lord may continue his word*] The verb is most commonly rendered 'establish' and may be so translated here. Cf. 1 Sam. i. 23 where the same phrase occurs. The sense is of confirming and ratifying what has previously been promised. David is here looking forward to the generations that shall come after him, which fact the A. V. has endeavoured to make clear by the rendering 'continue'. The word, or promise, alluded to is found 2 Sam. vii. 25—29.

saying, If thy children take heed to their way] In the passage just mentioned where the promise is recorded there are none of these conditions specified; but we are sure that God's promise was not an unconditional one, and in his Psalms (cxxxii. 12) David has expressly made mention of the condition in words very similar to this verse.

there shall not fail thee (*said he*) *a man on the throne of Israel*] The

thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, *and* what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace,

Heb. is literally 'there shall not be cut off unto thee a man from upon the throne of Israel'; and the same phrase occurs afterwards ch. viii. 25, ix. 5, and in other parts of the Bible. The sense is 'there never shall be wanting some one of thy race to sit on the throne.' The promise was made to David's line, and was fulfilled; for as long as the kingdom of Judah existed the family of David were kings.

There is no word in the Hebrew for the parenthetic 'said he,' but the clause is preceded by the word usually rendered 'saying,' which seems to have been introduced by some scribe from the earlier part of the verse. The LXX. translates the Hebrew literally (i.e. repeating λέγων); the Vulgate notices neither the 'saying' nor 'said he'.

5. *what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me*] This one of the sons of Zeruiah had been all through his reign too strong for his uncle. See 2 Sam. iii. 39: and for the rough remonstrances of Joab with David, cf. 2 Sam. xix. 5—7. The slaughter of Absalom, though neither mentioned here by David, nor afterwards by Solomon, when Joab is put to death, must have been constantly present to their minds.

unto Abner the son of Ner] Ner being brother of Kish (1 Chron. ix. 36), the father of Saul, we can understand how Abner became a man of much importance in the court of Saul, under whom he was commander-in-chief. After the death of Saul it was Abner who proclaimed Ishbosheth and supported him against David, until some quarrel arising Abner made overtures to David which were favourably received. During the earlier events of the war between Ishbosheth's supporters and those of David, Abner to save his own life had slain Asahel, Joab's younger brother. To avenge this death and probably also from jealousy, lest Abner coming into David's service should become more influential than himself, Joab calling Abner aside as he was departing from the court, in conjunction with Abishai his brother treacherously slew him. Owing to Abner's early course of action David might have been suspected of conniving at his murder. The exposure to such a suspicion no doubt aggravated the king's sorrow. David's lament over Abner's death is found 2 Sam. iii. 33, 34. He never forgave the murder, though he was unable during his lifetime to take vengeance on the perpetrator.

unto Amasa the son of Jether] Amasa was a son of David's sister Abigail, and the name of her husband is elsewhere (2 Sam. xvii. 25) written 'Ithra.' Amasa took the side of Absalom when that prince rebelled against his father, but David forgave this, when Absalom had been slain by Joab, and appointed Amasa commander-in-chief in Joab's place (2 Sam. xix. 13). Afterwards, under the pretence of saluting Amasa, Joab gave him a fatal wound with a sword which he held hidden in his left hand (2 Sam. xx. 10).

the blood of war in peace] For both these murders were committed

and put the blood of war upon his girdle that *was* about
6 his loins, and in his shoes that *were* on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go
7 down *to* the grave in peace. But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of *those* that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because
8 of Absalom thy brother. And behold, *thou hast* with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which

when the opportunity had been gained under the guise of friendship.

his girdle...his shoes] Both these portions of his dress must have been covered with the blood spurting and flowing from wounds inflicted at such close quarters.

6. *Do therefore according to thy wisdom*] Compare verse 9. The wisdom to which David in both cases alludes is a politic method of bringing these men to do something for which they might be put to death. Such men were specially dangerous in the court of a young king.

his hoar head] Most likely Joab was already an old man not much younger than David himself. This may account for some of the freedom of his speech to the king.

go down to *the grave in peace*] The advice is put in a more direct form in verse 9, concerning Shimei, 'Bring his hoar head down to the grave with blood.'

The Hebrew construction (the jussive after לֹא not אַל) seems to imply a suggestion rather than a direct command. 'I recommend you not to let,' &c.

7. *sons of Barzillai the Gileadite*] The deserving conduct of Barzillai, during David's flight from Absalom, is narrated 2 Sam. xix. 31 *seqq*. The Chimham there mentioned was probably a son of Barzillai, though we are not expressly told so. No other son is anywhere spoken of, but we find that Barzillai had daughters (Ezra ii. 61; Neh. vii. 63) and he probably was father of a large family. Barzillai, at his advanced age, would not come alone to conduct David over Jordan, and though he only commends one person to the king's attention there may have been several sons in his retinue.

of those *that eat at thy table*] A common mode in Eastern countries of shewing regard. Thus Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was provided for at David's table (2 Sam. ix. 7, 10, 11), and such treatment put the recipient in a position like that of the king's sons.

for so they came to me] i.e. With kind acts and generous supplies of food when I was in great need. Let their reward be of a similar nature.

8. thou hast *with thee Shimei*] Shimei was not at present living in Jerusalem (see verse 36), but that his conduct might be more closely watched Solomon compelled him to come and dwell in the city.

cursed me *with* a grievous curse in the day when I went *to* Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me *at* Jordan, and I sware to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou *art* a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down *to* the grave with blood. So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David. And the days that

Bahurim] Besides its connexion with the story of Shimei, this place is mentioned (2 Sam. xvii. 18) as the spot where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were concealed in the well, or cistern, to avoid the pursuit of Absalom's servants; and in the account of Phaltiel's separation from Michal when she was sent back to David (2 Sam. iii. 16) by Ishbosheth. It must have been situate near the road from Jerusalem to the fords of the Jordan, but it is not mentioned in Joshua, nor has its situation been identified.

Mahanaim] was on the east of Jordan, and was so named by Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 2) because he there saw the host (*Mahaneh*) of God. Abner made his head-quarters there while he was supporting Ishbosheth against David (2 Sam. ii. 8). Its strong position and fortification, which are specially dwelt on by Josephus (*Ant.* VII. 9, 8) no doubt led Abner to choose it, as did David likewise in his flight before Absalom.

came down to meet me] Shimei makes a merit of being among the first to give the king welcome on his return (2 Sam. xix. 20). And though Abishai urged that he should straightway be put to death, David refused to have the day of his restoration stained by the blood of any man.

9. *hold him not guiltless*] i.e. Be sure not to let him go unpunished. Find out some good reason for vengeance to be taken on him. We are not to wonder at these injunctions of David, which were not unnatural, both for the satisfaction of his own feelings and for providing for the security of Solomon's throne. Joab was a dangerous man to be left alive, and Shimei, with Oriental fickleness, would curse Solomon as readily as he had cursed David, should a reverse of fortune come upon him. Nor are we to look for New Testament virtues in even the best men of the older covenant. The Christian thinks it nobler to forgive, following the lessons of his master, but what David saw of Christ was in the less clear vision of faith, and neither he nor his people are to be expected to rise in any great degree towards the nobility of Christian forgiveness. Yet David was very generous toward Saul. He seems to have become less forgiving in his old age, though doubtless he was thinking chiefly of Solomon's safety.

10. *in the city of David*] The place is defined (2 Sam. v. 7) as 'the stronghold of Zion.' We are told (*Aboth de-Rabbi Nathan* i. 35) that 'no graves are made in Jerusalem, except the tombs of the house of David, and of Huldah the prophetess, which have been there from

David reigned over Israel *were* forty years: seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem.

12 Then sat Solomon upon the throne of David his father;
13 and his kingdom was established greatly. And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon. And she said, Comest thou peaceably? And he
14 said, Peaceably. He said moreover, I have somewhat to
15 say unto thee. And she said, Say on. And he said, Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and *that* all Israel set their faces on me, that *I* should reign: howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's: for it was his
16 from the LORD. And now I ask one petition of thee, deny

the days of the first prophets.' Josephus (*Ant.* VII. 15. 3) gives an account of the wealth that Solomon deposited in his father's grave, and states that the tomb was afterwards opened and some of this wealth carried away, first by Hyrcanus the high priest, when he was besieged by Antiochus, and a second time by Herod the Great. But the chambers in which the treasure was buried could be reached without disturbing the royal burying-place.

11. *seven years reigned he in Hebron*] According to 2 Sam. v. 5 the time was seven years and six months. The Old Testament writers often in this way omit pieces of a year, and speak only of the full years. Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 27.

13—25. ADONIJAH ASKS FOR ABISHAG TO WIFE AND IS PUT TO DEATH BY SOLOMON. (Not in Chronicles.)

13. *Comest thou peaceably*] There was the same sort of alarm in Bath-sheba's mind as was in those of the people of Bethlehem when Samuel came to visit Jesse before David was anointed (1 Sam. xvi. 4), when the elders of the town trembled. She expected no good from any scheme of Adonijah's, and her question refers more to the national welfare than to her personal concerns.

15. *Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine*] He means that as the eldest living son of David, he could rightly claim it. Thus he in a way apologizes for his previous attempt to secure the succession to himself.

set their faces on me] They looked forward to my accession and were resolved on bringing it about. Comp. Jer. xlii. 17 'the men that set their faces to go down into Egypt...shall die.' Adonijah would thus also make it appear that the voice and goodwill of the people had been on his side.

for it was his from the Lord] He professes his resignation to what has happened, and ascribes it to the Divine will that he may the better cloak his desires and intentions. Perhaps 'it became his from the

me not. And she said unto him, Say on. And he said, 17
Speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, (for he will not
say thee nay,) that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to
wife. And Bath-sheba said, Well; I will speak for thee unto 18
the king. Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to 19
speak unto him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to
meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his
throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother;
and she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one 20

Lord' would give the force of his words better. It is to be noted how, as if in friendship, he speaks of Solomon as his brother.

16. *deny me not*] The Hebrew is 'turn not away my face,' and implies that a person whose suit is refused is turned away in disgrace. The same expression is rendered 'to say not nay' in verses 17 and 20. Adonijah's argument was to this effect: 'You know I have lost a great deal, surely you will not refuse me this slight request.'

17. *that he give me Abishag*] It is highly probable that the construction which Solomon put upon Adonijah's request was the true one, for in the East the widows of the late king become the wives of his successor, and to marry, or seek to marry, such a widow is equivalent to putting forward a claim to the throne. Cf. God's message to David (2 Sam. xii. 8) 'I gave thee...thy master's wives into thy bosom,' and also the threatening in the verses which follow that passage. See too 1 Kings xx. 7; 2 Kings xxiv. 15. Peter Martyr in his comment on this verse gives, as an illustration of the proud aspirations which are sometimes fostered by marriage with a royal widow, the case of Admiral Seymour, who married Catharine Parr, the widow of Henry VIII., and straightway after his marriage began to plot rebellion.

18. *I will speak for thee*] Bath-sheba does not seem to have suspected Adonijah's design, and this simplicity of hers he perhaps hoped to trade upon, and thought that his petition, coming to Solomon through her, might appear less dangerous. That she should consent to ask the king was not unnatural. 'The damsel was very fair' (i. 4) and Adonijah 'a very goodly man' (i. 6), and such a marriage might appear to her not unfitting.

19. *caused a seat to be set for the king's mother*] For 'seat' we should have **throne**. The word is the same as that which occurs earlier in the verse for Solomon's own 'throne.' In Eastern nations the queen-mother was a very important personage and treated with the same sort of reverence as the king. This we may see in the case of Maachah (1 Kings xv. 13) who held authority and was called queen, even during the reign of her grandson Asa. Compare also the influential position of Athaliah, which enabled her to destroy nearly all the seed-royal (2 Kings xi. 1).

and she sat on his right hand] This being the place of greatest honour, cf. Ps. xlv. 9.

small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say
21 thee nay. And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be
22 given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah.
23 Then king Solomon sware by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this
24 word against his own life. Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me a house, as he
25 promised, Adonijah shall be put to death *this* day. And

20. *I desire one small petition of thee*] These words seem to confirm what has been said above, that Bath-sheba had not realized the grave import of her request.

I will not say thee nay] i.e. If it be possible for me to grant it. The condition, though unexpressed, is of necessity understood.

22. *and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah*] These two having aided Adonijah in his attempt on the throne, would naturally have been his chief ministers and advisers had he succeeded. So Solomon includes them with him, and thus Bath-sheba may see whither the design of Adonijah is tending.

The Vulgate renders the clause 'even for him' (literally **and for him**) in a different sense, 'et habet Abiathar, &c.' making the words imply that Adonijah is already equipped with advisers for the kingdom at which he is aiming.

The LXX. has 'And he has Abiathar and Joab the son of Zeruiah, the chief captain as his friend' (ἑταῖρος). The last word of the Hebrew text is צרויה. It would seem as though the LXX. had read after this רעהו or רעו, = his friend, which is not very unlike the final letters of the present Hebrew. Whether there was some word there which has fallen out or the version is the result of a misreading we cannot be sure. There is, without doubt, some awkwardness in the text as it now stands.

23. *God do so to me, and more also*] This is a very idiomatic rendering for the Hebrew, which is literally 'Thus shall God do to me, and thus shall He add.' The expression occurs again in xix. 2, xx. 10, and in 2 Kings vi. 31 as well as several times in the books of Samuel, and in Ruth i. 17.

24. *who hath made me a house*] 'House' here is used in the sense of 'possessions,' 'property.' So (Esther viii. 1) the 'house' of Haman, i.e. his wealth and property, is given to queen Esther. The LXX. renders in that place by ὅσα ὑπῆρχεν Ἀμάν.

king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died.

And unto Abiathar the priest said the king, Get thee *to* 26
Anathoth, unto thine own fields; for thou *art* worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord GOD before David my father, and because thou hast been afflicted in all where*in* my father was afflicted. So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the LORD; that *he* might fulfil the word of the LORD, which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh.

25. *by the hand of Benaiah*] To Benaiah was committed not the oversight, but the execution of the sentence. In like manner he puts to death Joab (ver. 34) and Shimei (ver. 46). Solomon was absolute as a monarch, and the command was executed as promptly as it was given. The LXX. fills out the sentence thus, καὶ ἀπέθανεν Ἀδωνίας ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

26—27. PUNISHMENT OF ABIATHAR. (Not in Chronicles.)

26. *Get thee* to *Anathoth*] This city was in the tribe of Benjamin, and has been identified by Robinson with *Anáta* at the distance of 1¼ hours N.N.E. of Jerusalem. It is mentioned as a priest's city with suburbs in Josh. xxi. 18; 1 Chron. vi. 60, and Jeremiah was sprung from 'the priests that were in Anathoth' (Jer. i. 1). Here Abiathar must have had some ground, and to this Solomon banished him. We find that the cousin of Jeremiah, Hanameel, possessed land at Anathoth, which Jeremiah purchased (Jer. xxxii. 6—12).

worthy of death] Hebrew, *a man of death*, deserving it. So in xx. 42 'a man whom I appointed to utter destruction' is literally 'the man of my doom,' i.e. whom I had doomed.

thou barest the ark of the Lord] Abiathar was with David in his flight before Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 24—29) when the ark of God was carried away from Jerusalem, and he and Zadok bore it back again according to David's orders.

hast been afflicted] Abiathar fled from Nob and came to David when he was pursued by Saul (1 Sam. xxii. 20), and also remained with him in the dangerous days which followed. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 8—9.

27. *So Solomon thrust out Abiathar*] The verb is the same which is used (Gen. iii. 24) of the *driving out* of Adam from Paradise.

fulfil the word of the Lord] The allusion is to 1 Sam. ii. 31—36, where it is foretold to Eli that his family, to which Abiathar belonged, should be deprived of the priest's office, and that a faithful priest should be raised up in their stead. The order of descent from Eli was Eli—Phinehas—Ahitub—Ahimelech—Abiathar. These were of the family of Ithamar. Zadok was of the family of Eleazar (1 Chron.

28 Then tidings came to Joab: for Joab had turned after
Adonijah, though he turned not after Absalom. And Joab
fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold on
29 the horns of the altar. And it was told king Solomon that
Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the LORD; and behold,
he is by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of
30 Jehoiada, saying, Go, fall upon him. And Benaiah came to
the tabernacle of the LORD, and said unto him, Thus saith
the king, Come forth. And he said, Nay; but I will die
here. And Benaiah brought the king word again, saying,

vi. 8). This is the first passage in the O.T. where the phrase 'to fulfil the word of the Lord' appears.

28—35. FLIGHT OF JOAB AND HIS DEATH. BENAIAH SUCCEEDS HIM AS CAPTAIN OF THE HOST. (Not in Chronicles.)

28. *Then tidings came to Joab*] The Hebrew says '**And the** tidings came to Joab', i.e. of Abiathar's banishment, and he felt that his own turn was soon to come.

turned after] i.e. Took the side of. It was Joab, who being on David's side, slew Absalom (2 Sam. xviii. 14). This crime, though never brought forward, no doubt instigated David to advise, and Solomon to provide that Joab should be taken out of the way. All the ancient versions except the Chaldee, have here 'For Joab had turned after Adonijah, and had not turned after Solomon.'

the tabernacle of the Lord] The word here, as elsewhere, is the ordinary word for a **tent**, and if thus translated gives to the English reader a better notion of what the structure was.

horns of the altar] See above on i. 50. Joab fled for sanctuary to the same place and in the same fashion as Adonijah had done.

29. he is *by the altar*] The LXX. has 'he has taken hold of the horns of the altar', after which that version adds 'And Solomon the king sent to Joab, saying, What has happened to thee that thou hast fled to the altar? And Joab said, Because I was afraid of thee, and fled unto the Lord.' These words seem merely an expansion of the narrative, and we need not suppose that they represent a lost clause of the Hebrew.

30. *Come forth*] Benaiah would prefer, if it may be, to execute the sentence upon Joab elsewhere than within the precincts of the tabernacle.

I will die here] Joab is conscious of Benaiah's errand, but perhaps hopes still to escape death if he remain at the altar.

brought the king word again] It seems from this that Solomon had thought it would be possible to bring Joab away from the altar. When this could not be done Benaiah feels that he may return for further orders.

Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. And the king 31
said unto him, Do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and
bury him; that thou mayest take away the innocent blood,
which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father.
And the LORD shall return his blood upon his own head, 32
who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he,
and slew them with the sword, my father David not know-
ing *thereof, to wit*, Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host
of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host
of Judah. Their blood shall therefore return upon the head 33
of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever: but upon
David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon
his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the LORD.
So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up, and fell upon him, 34

31. *and bury him*] The LXX. adds these words to the king's previous order in verse 29. Joab was Solomon's cousin, and so though it was a political necessity to put him to death, the king would not care to add further dishonour to the dead body.

the innocent blood] i.e. The causeless bloodshed of innocent people of which Joab had been guilty, and which, until it was avenged, would lie at the door of David and his descendants.

32. *his blood*] i.e. The blood which he hath shed.

my father David not knowing thereof] The verb is a finite tense and not a participle, and the clause may therefore be rendered 'and my father D. **knew it not.**'

Abner] See notes on verse 5 above. In that verse both Abner and Amasa are called captains of the host of Israel, while here the latter is distinguished as captain of the host of Judah. That the division in the people was well marked long before the revolt of the ten tribes against Rehoboam may be seen from the strife which took place about David's return after the death of Absalom (2 Sam. xix. 41—43). Also when Joab numbered the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 9) the census of the two hosts was given in separately.

33. *and upon the head of his seed for ever*] Solomon has in mind here the words of his father at the time of Abner's murder (2 Sam. iii. 29). David's prayer then was "let the blood rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house."

shall there be peace for ever] The law of Moses ordained that the shedder of innocent blood should not go unpunished (Deut. xix. 13), and it is said 'Thine eye shall not pity him.....that it may go well with thee.' Hence there was hope of peace after the murderer was punished.

34. *went up*] i.e. To the Tent of the Lord, which probably stood on a higher part of Mt. Zion than did Solomon's own house.

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and slew him: and he was buried in his own house in the
35 wilderness. And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada
in his room over the host: and Zadok the priest did the
king put in the room of Abiathar.
36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said
unto him, Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell
37 there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall
be, *that* on the day thou goest out, and passest over the
brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou
shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own
38 head. And Shimei said unto the king, The saying *is* good:

buried in his own house] i.e. In the ground around his home. He appears to have had a home far out in the open country.

in the wilderness] Probably that district known as the wilderness of Judah. Wilderness, or desert, gives however an insufficient idea of the kind of country that is meant. It was land under no regular cultivation, but yet to which cattle might be driven for pasturage. So in the narrative of the feeding of the Five Thousand where St Matthew (xiv. 15) speaks of 'a desert place,' St John (vi. 10) says 'now there was much grass in the place.'

35. *put in the room of Abiathar*] The LXX. amplifies and says that Zadok was now appointed εἰς ἱερέα πρῶτον, to be the first priest. Hitherto he seems to have had his post at Gibeon. There was not a great interval between the deposition of Abiathar and the building of the Temple, after which event the worship at Gibeon would cease. In the interval some deputy would fill Zadok's place there.

In the LXX. there is found a long additional passage here, concerning Solomon's wisdom, his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, his offerings and sacrifices, and his buildings. Then follows almost in the words of the earlier part of this chapter (vv. 8, 9) David's charge concerning Shimei. The whole insertion seems confused and purposeless.

36—46. SHIMEI MEETS WITH HIS DESERTS. (Not in Chronicles.)

36. *sent and called for Shimei*] Solomon sent for him to Jerusalem from Bahurim (see verse 8). Keeping him under close watch, he could hardly fail to find him tripping.

37. *passest over the brook Kidron*] This brook, being between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, on that side of Jerusalem where Shimei would go if he wanted to return to Bahurim. Solomon takes the distance in this direction as a measure of bounds within which he must keep himself on every side. For in going afterwards to Gath he of course did not cross the brook Kidron.

thou shalt know] The Hebrew often uses a future for an imperative. Here it is better to render **'Know** for certain' &c. It is so rendered in verse 42.

as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do. And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days. And it came to 39
pass at the end of three years, that two of the servants of Shimei ran away unto Achish son of Maachah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants *be* in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath 40
to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath. And it was told Solomon 41
that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem *to* Gath, and was come again. And the king sent and called for Shimei, and 42
said unto him, Did I not make thee to swear by the LORD, and protested unto thee, saying, Know for a certain, on the day thou goest out, and walkest *abroad* any whither, that thou shalt surely die? and thou saidst unto me, The word *that* I have heard *is* good. Why then hast thou not kept 43
the oath of the LORD, and the commandment that I have charged thee with? The king said moreover to Shimei, 44
Thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy

38. *many days*] The LXX. has τρία ἔτη, three years, a reading evidently drawn from the next verse.

39. *two of the servants of Shimei*] Shimei appears to have been a man of wealth, both from this circumstance, and from his ability to establish himself in Jerusalem as soon as Solomon commanded him. The servants may have been Philistines.

Achish son of Maachah king of Gath] The Achish to whom David fled on two occasions (1 Sam. xxi. 10; xxvii. 2) is called the son of Maoch, which may be only another form of Maachah. But the time which elapsed between David's flight and the death of Shimei makes it doubtful whether the same man was king still. The same royal names were so frequently carried on in alternate generations that the similarity need not surprise us. So Hannibal was the son of Hamilcar, and Hamilcar the son of a former Hannibal.

they told Shimei] i.e. Some persons who had come to know of the whereabouts of the servants.

42. *Did I not make thee to swear by the Lord*] There is no mention of an oath in the previous part of the narrative (ver. 37), but the solemnity of the charge was probably so enforced. The LXX, making both portions of the story to correspond, inserts in verse 37 'and the king made him to swear in that day.'

The word that *I have heard*] 'The saying &c.' as in verse 38. The same Hebrew will thus have the same English.

43. *the oath of the Lord*] i.e. Which was sworn unto the Lord.

44. *Thou knowest*] The Hebrew inserts the pronoun emphatically. It was needless for Solomon to recall the wrong with which Shimei's own conscience would upbraid him.

to, that thou didst to David my father: therefore the LORD
45 shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head; and king
Solomon *shall be* blessed, and the throne of David shall be
46 established before the LORD for ever. So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; which went out, and fell upon him, that he died. And the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

the Lord shall return] The Hebrew says 'the Lord hath returned.' The punishment is so sure that the king speaks of it as already inflicted. He is but the Lord's agent, and the doom of Shimei is counted as executed. This appears the best way of understanding the grammar, as there is no preceding verb from which this should derive the signification of an imperfect.

45. *Solomon* shall be *blessed*] See above on verse 33.

the throne of David shall be established] According to God's promise (2 Sam. vii. 13—16). Solomon regards the punishments which he has inflicted and is about to inflict, as a fulfilment of the conditions under which the promise was made. His action is the upholding of righteousness in the kingdom.

46. *which went out*] Literally '**and he** went out,' which reads rather better than the A.V.

in the hand of Solomon] The conspirators who might have been dangerous were all removed, and now, though still but a youth, Solomon had gained complete hold of the reins of government. Cf. 2 Chron. i. 1, where it is said that he 'was strengthened in his kingdom, and the Lord his God was with him.'

The Vulgate joins on the last clause of this verse to the first verse of the next chapter; which seems to be a most natural connexion.

In the Chronicles no mention is made either of David's dying injunctions to his son, nor of their execution. The compiler of that book appears designedly to have omitted all notice of the troubles under which David suffered, and so it does not fall within his plan to speak of the punishment of his adversaries. The religious zeal of Solomon, his wealth and wisdom, his abundant offerings and the building of the Temple were themes better suited to the time when the Chronicler compiled his narrative, and such matter therefore makes up the most part of his book.

CH. III. 1—4. SOLOMON MARRIES PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. SACRIFICES STILL OFFERED ON THE HIGH PLACES. SOLOMON'S SACRIFICE AT GIBEON. (2 Chron. i. 3.)

At the beginning of this Chapter the LXX. inserts a long passage which has nothing to correspond to it in the Hebrew. It speaks of Solomon's wisdom, the number of the people, the presents of those who were tributary to Solomon, the provisions for his table, the names of his chief ministers, and contains a notice of his horses and chariots. Some portions of this passage are drawn from Chapter iv. and some

And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, 3
and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city
of David, until he had made an end of building his own
house, and the house of the LORD, and the wall of Jerusa-
lem round about. Only the people sacrificed in high places, 2

from 2 Chron. ix. 25, 26. The verses of Chapter iv. which are introduced here are omitted by the LXX. in that place. See notes there.

1. *Pharaoh king of Egypt*] This is the first notice since the Exodus of any connexion of Israel with Egypt. It is impossible to decide with certainty which Pharaoh it was whose daughter Solomon took to wife. The 22nd Egyptian dynasty commenced with Sheshonk I. (the Shishak of the Bible), about B.C. 990. This monarch did much to advance the Egyptian power, which under the previous Tanite sovereigns of the 21st dynasty had sunk very low. We shall find Shishak (1 Kings xi. 40) receiving Jeroboam when he fled from Solomon. The wife of Solomon must therefore have been a daughter of a king in the previous dynasty, the kings of which would be likely to welcome an alliance with so powerful a monarch. The last of these was Psusennes II, but as he is said by Manetho to have reigned only fourteen years, it seems more probable that the princess whom Solomon married was the daughter of Psinaces who preceded Psusennes. Pharaoh is used in the Bible as the royal title of the Egyptian kings, and not as the proper name of any single person.

This wife of Solomon probably embraced Judaism, as we find no reproach against him for this marriage, nor is any Egyptian deity mentioned among those for whom Solomon at a later time built high places (1 Kings xi. 1—8) when strange women turned away his heart after other gods.

into the city of David] This was the eastern portion of the hill of Zion on which the temple was afterwards built. Solomon considered this too sacred a place for his own dwelling, because thither the ark of the Lord had come (2 Chron. viii. 11).

his own house] This was outside the city of David, and from 1 Kings vii. 8 we can see that the house for Pharaoh's daughter was close to the king's own house, and built after the same fashion and of like grandeur. The time which Solomon took about building his own house was thirteen years (cf. vii. 1), during this period the Egyptian wife continued to dwell in the city of David. The marriage song of the 45th Psalm is referred by the oldest interpreters to this marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter.

2. *Only the people sacrificed*] The first word here seems to force us to connect this verse with the last clause of the previous chapter. The kingdom was established and all was well in temporal matters, but there was still a part of the Divine appointment not duly observed. There were high places in considerable numbers on which the people offered sacrifices. It was ordained (Deut. xii. 13, 14) that this should not be so. "Offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest, but

because there was no house built unto the name of the
3 LORD, until those days. And Solomon loved the LORD,
walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed
4 and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to
Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that *was* the great high place:

in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes.' But as yet this one place had not been fixed. So the previous ordinance of Exodus (xx. 24) intended for an unsettled time was still adhered to. God had there said 'In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.' An altar of earth was to be erected, and burnt offerings and peace offerings brought thither. This early ordinance was doubtless meant to be superseded as soon as possible after the settlement in Canaan, but events happened which delayed the choice of one place for all offerings, and so we find that God accepts the sacrifice of Gideon at Ophrah (Judges vi. 23), of Manoah at Zorah (Judges xiii. 19), while Samuel (1 Sam. ix. 12) offers sacrifice at the high place in the land of Zuph, and many other instances of the worship in the high places are to be found in the books of Samuel, and there is no expression anywhere of God's disapproval. As soon as we enter on the books of the Kings we find that the writer has another standpoint, and counts it an evil that the high places still remain. Hence the language of this verse.

sacrificed] It is not possible to express the exact force in good English of the participle used both here and in the next verse. It implies the continuance of this custom, both with king and people, of worshipping on the high places. The Hebrew requires both here and in the following verse 'in the high places.' They were well-known seats of worship.

unto the name of the Lord] The phrase in the Pentateuch is that God 'chooses to place His name' where He desires to be worshipped. Cf. Deut. xii. 11; xiv. 23; xvi. 2, 6, 11; &c. Hence 'Name' came to be synonymous with 'worship'; *nomen* gained the sense of *numen*.

3. *walking in the statutes of David his father*] These are the observances which David had enjoined in ii. 3. There they are called 'the charge of the Lord,' and are here named 'of David,' because David had been diligent in their observance. So in 2 Kings xvii. 8, 'the statutes of the heathen' means that idolatrous worship which the heathen nations practised.

4. *to Gibeon*] The Hivite city which was assigned by Joshua to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 21—25). It is most known in early times for the cunning device of its inhabitants to secure a treaty with Joshua and the Israelites (Josh. ix.), and in later history because it was the place where the tabernacle of the congregation and the brazen altar of burnt-offering were set up until the completion of Solomon's temple. Whether this position was chosen as a high place by the Israelites or whether it had been a place used for worship by the Hivites beforetime there is nothing to indicate.

the great high place] Probably because the tabernacle was there.

a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer up on that altar.

In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by 5
night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And So- 6
lomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy ser- 7
vant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in. And thy ser- 8

This was likely to make it more famous than its neighbours at Ramah or Mizpeh.

a thousand burnt offerings] In the Chronicles (2 Chron. i. 2, 3) we are told a little more about this sacrifice. The king had consulted all the people, and the great officers, and went up in a solemn procession with all the congregation. This accounts for the abundance of the offerings. After this occasion we hear no more of sacrifices at Gibeon.

5—15. GOD APPEARS TO SOLOMON IN A DREAM AT GIBEON. (2 Chron. i. 7—13.)

5. *In Gibeon*] The narrative which follows shews that God accepted the sacrifice of the king, though from want of a proper temple, it was offered on the high place.

in a dream] The frequent way in which God is said to have made known His will. Thus the angel of God spake unto Jacob in a dream (Gen. xxxi. 11), and Joseph speaks of Pharaoh's dream (Gen. xli. 25) as sent from God. Hence it came to pass that men expected divine guidance through this channel. So Saul (1 Sam. xxviii. 6, 15) when he had inquired of the Lord, was distressed because he was not answered either *by dreams*, or by Urim, or by prophets. It is to be noted that it is Jehovah (the LORD) that appears, but Elohim (God) who speaks to Solomon.

6. *great mercy*] As the word is the same as that rendered **kindness** in the latter half of the verse it is better to render it so here. The first kindness was during David's life, the further kindness was in giving him a successor.

7. *I* am but *a little child*] This is a form of expression meant to indicate want of experience, but cannot be pressed literally. What Solomon's age may have been we have very imperfect data for judging. The ordinary chronology puts the murder of Uriah about twenty years before David's death. If this be correct Solomon might be at this time 17 or 18 years old. Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*) says 22.

to go out or come in] This expression of going out and coming in is frequent in one form or another for the manner of leading one's life,

vant *is* in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen,
a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted
9 for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that *I* may discern between
good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy *so* great a
10 people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon
11 had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thy-
12 self understanding to discern judgment; behold, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before
13 thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee *that* which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among

and engaging in one's proper duties. So Joshua uses it (xiv. 11) of his fitness for the leadership of Israel. Moses (Deut. xxxi. 2) when he is speaking of his growing age, says he can no more go out and come in.

8. *a great people*, &c.] The language is that of inexperience, which exaggerates the extent of duties and cares which it has not yet encountered, and which come upon it all at once.

9. *an understanding heart*] This is explained (2 Chron. i. 10) by 'wisdom and knowledge.' The participle rendered 'understanding' is literally 'hearing,' and the LXX. has paraphrased the clause thus: 'a heart to hear and judge thy people in righteousness.' But the hearing of the heart must refer to the following of the Divine guidance and promptings from within. That this was Solomon's meaning seems certain, from the end of this verse 'Who is able to judge this thy so great people?' unless (that is) he have thy constant leading, and attend thereto?

The word rendered 'great' in this verse is different from that so translated in verse 8. Here the literal sense is 'heavy,' and the reference is to the great burden of care which the king must take upon himself.

11. *to discern judgement*] Literally, 'to hear judgement.' The word is the same as in verse 9, where see note.

12. *according to thy words*] The Hebrew is singular, and there seems no gain in the English plural.

so that there was none] It is more agreeable to the English idiom in this sense to render 'there **hath been** none.' In the matter of tenses the English and Hebrew are not at all conterminous, and choice must at times be made on the ground of English usage simply.

13. *so that there shall not be*] The Hebrew is precisely the same as in the previous verse. Render therefore 'so that there hath not been.'

the kings like unto thee all thy days. And if thou wilt walk 14
in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments,
as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.
And Solomon awoke; and behold, *it was* a dream. And 15
he came *to* Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the 16

The translation of the A.V. is no doubt due to the words with which the verse closes 'all thy days.' But these words may be very well understood, if we suppose them to refer to the duration of Solomon's prosperity. 'There hath been none so prosperous as thou shalt be for all thy days.' The LXX. renders 'there hath not been a man like thee among kings,' and omits 'all thy days.'

14. *as thy father David did walk*] We are not to draw from words like these an approval by God of all David's life, but only that his heart was right towards God for the most part, and his repentance sincere for the sins into which he fell.

I will lengthen thy days] Not only shall the king's life be made prosperous, but God will add to his days if he be observant of His laws.

15. *behold* it was *a dream*] So of Pharaoh (Gen. xli. 7). This expression does not imply, as at first sight might be supposed, that the vision was something illusory and not to be trusted to. On the contrary, the dream was one of the recognized modes whereby men expected to receive knowledge of the divine will. (See above on verse 5.) Hence in this case, Solomon goes to Jerusalem and offers there a solemn sacrifice; while Pharaoh deemed his dream of so much concern, that 'his spirit was troubled' until he could find some one to interpret it.

before the ark of the covenant of the Lord] Which David had brought and set up on Mt Zion in the city of David. See 2 Sam. vi. 12; 1 Chron. xv. 1; xvi. 1.

The king's burnt offerings, peace offerings, and the feast to his servants were tokens of his faith in, and joy over, the promises which had been made to him in his dream.

The LXX. by way of comment says 'he stood before the altar which was before the ark of the covenant of the Lord on Zion.' In the Chronicles (2 Chron. i. 13) there is no mention of this second sacrifice on Zion. Probably the compiler deemed the splendid ceremonial and sacrifices at Gibeon, before the tabernacle of the congregation, to be so much the most important as to render the service on Zion not needful to be recorded.

16—28. SOLOMON'S JUDGEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO HARLOTS, AND THE EFFECT PRODUCED THEREBY. (Not in Chronicles.)

16. *Then came*, &c.] We need not, any more than with τότε in the New Test., consider 'then' as indicating immediate succession in order of time upon what has gone before.

17 king, and stood before him. And the one woman said, O
my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was
18 delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to
pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman
was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no
stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house.
19 And this woman's child died in the night; because she over-
20 laid it. And she rose at midnight, and took my son from
beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her
21 bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I
rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was
dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold,
22 it was not my son, which I did bear. And the other woman

harlots] The Chaldee paraphrase explains in the sense of πανδοκεύτριαι, but Josephus calls them (*Ant.* viii. 2, 2) ἑταίραι τὸν βίον.

and stood before him] The Eastern monarchs sat often to give judgement at the gate of the city and so were accessible to all applicants. So sat the elders of the city by the Mosaic ordinance (Deut. xxi. 19). Compare also Ruth iv. 11; 2 Sam. xix. 8; Prov. xxii. 22, in which last instance, the words 'in the gate' mean 'when he is before the tribunal, where his cause is heard.'

17. *I was delivered of a child with her*] In the narrative of Josephus the two children are said to have been born at the same hour of the same day. The LXX. renders 'we were delivered of children in the house,' making 'with her' equivalent to 'I as well as she.'

18. there was *no stranger with us*] Thus the mother of the dead child was able to persist in her false story. The word of one was as good as that of the other.

19. *overlaid it*] And so smothered it, while both mother and child were asleep.

20. *and laid it in her bosom*] It is not easy to account for the action of this woman. We need not however suppose her to have been possessed of very fine feelings, as indeed her after-behaviour shews. But it is somewhat more than unnatural to adopt such a scheme as this described here at a moment's notice. It may be that she was chiefly moved by anxiety to preserve her own health, which would be imperilled through the sudden loss of the babe which she was meant to nurse.

21. *behold it was dead*] i.e. I had a dead child in my bosom which I supposed to be mine.

I had considered] The form of the verb implies a careful examination, a looking over and over, and noticing such marks on the child's body as none but its mother would.

in the morning] When the daylight was sufficient for me to examine the child carefully.

said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king. Then 23
said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. And the king said, 24
Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and 25
give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the 26
woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yerned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but* divide *it*. Then 27
the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and

24. *Bring me a sword*] As the verb is not the same as that which in the next clause is rendered 'brought', it may be well to use different English. Read '**Fetch** me a sword.'

25. *Divide the living child*] According to Josephus, the order of the king was that both the living and the dead child should be divided and half of either be given to each mother. But this was not in Solomon's thought. He was not wishing to make a fair division of the two children, but, by threatening the living one, to bring to light the maternal feeling and so to find out to which of them it really belonged.

26. *her bowels yerned*] It was believed that some of the viscera were the seat of the emotions. Hence this expression is very common both in the Old and New Testament for the keenest and strongest feeling. The verb *yern*, cognate with the German adverb *gern*='eagerly', 'gladly', implies intense desire. The literal sense of the Hebrew verb is 'to grow excessively warm.' We speak of the heart *burning* within any one.

in no wise slay it] The mother's love comes out. She could be content if it only lived and she might see it, though it were called the child of another.

divide it] In this word she addresses those who stand ready to execute the king's sentence, 'divide (ye) it.'

27. *Give her the living child*] Not referring to the woman who had last spoken as the sequence of the clauses might lead us to expect. The king no doubt pointed to the mother who was desirous at all cost to keep the child alive.

The late Dr Bernard had a most ingenious explanation of the construction of this passage. The king, he said, was pondering the words of the two women. At last he broke forth in the language of the mother who had said 'Give her the living child and in no wise slay it.' And to that sentence, taken as representative of the person who had spoken it, he adds his own decision, 'She is the mother thereof.'

28 in no wise slay it: she *is* the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgement which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgement.

4 So king Solomon was king over all Israel. And these
2 *were* the princes which he had; Azariah the son of Zadok

28. *they feared the king*] As having a power beyond what they had seen in any other to detect wrong, and to find out truth and falsehood, and so to make certain the punishment of evildoers. There was no escape from such a judge.

the wisdom of God] i.e. Wisdom which God had given, and which made the king skilful in trying the very thoughts of those who came before him. A superhuman discernment had taken up its home within him.

Ch. IV. 1—20. Lists of Solomon's officers. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *over all Israel*] The whole land yielded him willing obedience, the people were contented and happy (see below, verse 20) and the enemies of the king were removed.

2. *Azariah the son of Zadok the priest*] The two last words are to be referred to Azariah and not to Zadok. The Vat. LXX. omits the title, but the Alex. text has ὁ ἱερεύς. On the contrary the Vulgate renders 'Sadoc *Sacerdotis*.' The Zadok here named is the son of Ahitub (1 Chron. vi. 8), and Azariah was really his grandson, the order being Zadok—Ahimaaz—Azariah. The use of 'son' thus loosely for grandson is not uncommon in the Old Test. Thus (Gen. xxix. 5) Laban is called the *son* of Nahor. He was really the son of Bethuel. Similarly (Ezra v. 1) Zachariah the prophet is called the *son* of Iddo, though Barachiah was his father and Iddo his grandfather.

The words 'the priest' have caused much discussion, and on the margin of the A.V. 'chief officer' is given as an alternative meaning. That the word may have another sense seems plain from 2 Sam. viii. 18. In that passage the same word is used of David's sons, and is rendered 'chief rulers' or 'princes' in A.V. The R.V. translates 'priests' in the text, with 'chief ministers' in the margin. We can hardly however think that David's sons were priests. But in the verse before us Azariah belongs to the priestly family, as much as Zadok and Abiathar who are called 'priests' (the same Hebrew word) in verse 4. Where there is no such connexion with the priestly line, Zabud the son of Nathan, in verse 5, is styled 'principal officer'; the R.V. is consistent and renders 'priest' there too, but puts 'chief minister' as an alternative.

It is probably on account of the difficulty of so many persons being called by the title usually rendered 'priest' that the LXX. omits the title both after Azariah's name, and after Zabud's, calling the latter

the priest, Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; 3
Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder. And Benaiah 4
the son of Jehoiada *was* over the host: and Zadok and Abi-
athar *were* the priests: and Azariah the son of Nathan *was* 5
over the officers: and Zabud the son of Nathan *was* prin-
cipal officer, *and* the king's friend: and Ahishar *was* over 6

merely ἑταῖρος τοῦ βασιλέως. It seems clear however from the instance of David's sons that the title had a sense in which it could be applied to others than those of the priestly line.

3. *Shisha*] This name appears as *Shavsha* (1 Chron. xviii. 16) and as *Sheva* (2 Sam. xx. 25). A comparison of those verses with 2 Sam. viii. 17, shews that the person meant was also called Seraiah, from which word the other forms are probably copyists' corruptions. Seraiah's office had descended to his sons, as was so often the case among the Jews. With the growth of the kingdom since David's time the duties of the royal scribe, or secretary, would have been much increased; we can therefore understand that two persons were needed for the office instead of one.

Jehoshaphat] He had held the same office in the days of David. See 2 Sam. viii. 16; xx. 24. The duties of the recorder, or remembrancer, were to keep records of such events as were important in the history of the country. Such annals have afforded, no doubt, a good deal of the matter for Kings and Chronicles. Such was the 'book of records of the Chronicles' (Esther vi. 1) in which Mordecai's service was registered, and from which it was read out to Ahasuerus.

4. *over the host*] Benaiah had been put into Joab's office. See ii. 34.

Zadok and Abiathar were *the priests*] The Hebrew says only 'were priests.' Abiathar was still called priest, we may presume, after his banishment to Anathoth. The existence of two chief places for worship and sacrifice, the one at Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, and the other, where the ark was kept, on Mt Zion, had made it necessary that there should be more than one principal priest. Hence Abiathar and Zadok were in office together, and now that Abiathar was deposed, Azariah had come in as a second priest.

5. *the officers*] The word signifies such persons as had the oversight of any work. Thus the same word is used for the victualling officers in verse 7; it is again used in v. 16 for the persons at the head of the preparation for the temple-building, and in ix. 23 of those who bare rule over the people that wrought in such works as the building of cities which is there described.

principal officer] The Hebrew word is *cohen*, usually = 'priest,' but see on verse 2.

the king's friend] This means a chief and intimate counsellor. It is applied to Hushai (2 Sam. xv. 37; xvi. 16) and from the relation in which Hushai stood to David we may see what is implied in the title.

the household: and Adoniram the son of Abda *was* over the
7 tribute. And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel,
which provided victuals for the king and his household:
8 each man *his* month in a year made provision. And these
9 *are* their names: The son of Hur, in mount Ephraim: the
son of Dekar, in Makaz, and in Shaalbim, and Beth-she-

6. After the mention of Ahishar, the LXX. (*Vat.*) adds καὶ Ἐλιὰκ ὁ οἰκονομος καὶ Ἐλιὰβ υἱὸς Σὰφ ἐπὶ τῆς πατριᾶς.

Adoniram] He is mentioned again v. 14; and the name is found in a contracted form *Adoram* (2 Sam. xx. 24; 1 Kings xii. 18) and *Hadoram* (2 Chron. x. 18). He was stoned to death by the Israelites to whom Rehoboam sent him, as a collector of tribute, after the revolt of the ten tribes to Jeroboam.

over the tribute] [R. V. **levy**.] This is the forced labour, in which form the service of tributaries was often exacted. The same word is also used (v. 13) of the men who did this forced labour. There it is rendered 'levy,' in A. V. It is the German *Frohndienst*, French *corvée*.

7. *twelve officers*] The stations of these men were in different parts of the country, and each for his month had to gather from the district assigned to him contributions in kind for the royal household.

8. *The son of Hur*] Better **Ben-Hur**. So the Vulgate and similarly in verses 9, 10, 11, 13. The name is a patronymic, and five out of these twelve officers are thus designated by their fathers' names rather than by their own. Perhaps at the time the father in each case was more distinguished than the son. The place of commissariat-officer is one which might well be given to a younger man of some well-known family. Two of the men were Solomon's sons-in-law.

in mount Ephraim] 'Mount' conveys a mistaken idea of the rich country of Ephraim. It was a hilly but very fertile region which stretched northwards from the tribe of Benjamin until the land sinks into the plain of Jezreel. It is separated from the Jordan valley by a plain on the east, and by another plain on the west from the Mediterranean sea. It would be more suitably called **hill country** than mountain.

9. *the son of Dekar*] Read **Ben-Deker**, according to the Hebrew pointing. The name Deker is found nowhere else.

in Makaz] The name does not occur again, and we can only conjecture the whereabouts of the place from the other names with which it is joined. Shaalbim, the town next mentioned, was in the tribe of Dan (Judges i. 35); Bethshemesh, was at the northern boundary of Judah, and was one of the 'suburb cities' allotted to the priests (Josh. xxi. 16); of Elon-beth-hanan nothing more is known. The Vulgate, following some Hebrew MSS. reads 'Elon and Bethhanan,' making two towns out of the name. It is clear however that Ben-Deker's district lay in Dan and on the borders of Judah.

mesh, and Elon-beth-hanan: the son of Hesed, in Aruboth; 10
to him *pertained* Sochoh, and all the land of Hepher: the 11
son of Abinadab, *in* all the region of Dor; which had Ta-
phath the daughter of Solomon to wife: Baana the son of 12
Ahilud; *to him pertained* Taanach and Megiddo, and all

10. *the son of Hesed*] Read **Ben-Hesed.** Of Hesed we have no further notice.

in Aruboth] The Hebrew points require us to spell the word **Arub-both.** Judging from the names which follow, Arubboth was a town or district in the low country lying between the mountainous portion of Judah and the Mediterranean. There was *Sochoh* (more correctly **Socoh**) a place noticed Josh. xv. 35, and also as being near the encampment of the Philistines in Goliath's time (1 Sam. xvii. 1). A king of *Hepher* is mentioned Josh. xii. 17, to whom probably this land of Hepher pertained. The other names in the list in Joshua are of towns in this district to which we know Socoh belonged.

11. *the son of Abinadab*] Read **Ben-Abinadab.** Abinadab was a very common Jewish name. We have no further mention of this man.

in *all the region of Dor*] Hebrew *Naphath Dor.* Dor was an ancient city of the Canaanites, lying on the sea-coast under the side of Mount Carmel. It was in the tribe of Manasseh. It is first mentioned, and its king, in Josh. xi. 1, 2; xii. 23. From the cognates of *Naphath*, the word should imply *elevation.* Hence the R. V. renders 'the **height** of Dor,' and its vicinity to the mountain gives support to that rendering. Being close to the north of the fertile plain of Sharon the country about Dor was doubtless well suited for supplying Solomon's household.

Taphath the daughter of Solomon] Only mentioned here.

12. *Baana the son of Ahilud*] Probably the brother of Jehoshaphat the recorder mentioned in verse 3.

Taanach and Megiddo] These places are both inland to the east of Dor, Megiddo being a little north of Taanach which lies in the valley of Esdraelon. Cf. Judg. v. 19 'Taanach by the waters of Megiddo.' *Beth-shean* is still further east nearer to the Jordan, and *Zartanah* is no doubt Zarethan or Zarthan (Joshua iii. 16), which must have been close to the Jordan. *Abel-meholah* is south from Beth-shean in the Jordan valley. The name *Jokneam* should be, on the authority both of Hebrew, Septuagint and Vulgate, written *Jokmeam.* This place is mentioned 1 Chron. vi. 68, but in the parallel passage Joshua xxi. 22 *Kibzaim* is given instead. In both passages the place is assigned as one of the Levitical cities in the tribe of Ephraim, which would suit entirely with the text of the present verse, as it would then be in the same district as Zarthan and Abel-meholah, whereas *Jokneam* lies to the north of the ridge of Carmel, not far from the coast of the Mediterranean. The scribe's confusion between Jokmeam יקמעם and Kibzaim קבצים is not difficult to understand on looking at the forms in Hebrew.

Instead of the italics *to him pertained* at the beginning of this verse, it is simpler to substitute **in,** which stands in all the previous verses.

Beth-shean, which *is* by Zartanah beneath Jezreel, from Beth-shean to Abel-meholah, *even* unto *the place that is* beyond
13 Jokneam: the son of Geber, in Ramoth-gilead; to him *pertained* the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which *are* in Gilead; to him *also pertained* the region of Argob, which *is* in Bashan, threescore great cities *with* walls and brasen bars:

beneath Jezreel] implies that the place or district so described lay in the plain country stretching south of Jezreel. That city was built on a small height and looked south over the plain of Esdraelon.

13. *the son of Geber*] Better, **Ben-Geber.** The name 'Geber' occurs again in verse 19, but whether the same person is meant by it there is nothing to shew. It is only found in these two places.

in Ramoth-gilead] We now come to the mountainous district on the eastern side of the Jordan, in which were settled the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh.

the towns of Jair] As the Hebrew word (*havvoth*) rendered 'towns' is found only in this connexion it is better to treat it as a part of the proper name and render Havvoth-Jair. About these 'towns' there is some difficulty. They are first mentioned (Num. xxxii. 41) as 'small towns' in Gilead, and occupied by Jair the son of Manasseh. They are mentioned again (Deut. iii. 14) and said (Josh. xiii. 30) to be in Bashan and to be 60 in number, whereas in 1 Chron. ii. 23 they are counted as 60 only with the addition of certain other places. In this chapter the question is, are the Havvoth-Jair included in the region of Argob or not? As there is no conjunction, between the two clauses, it seems most natural to take the latter as a fuller definition of the former. 'To him belonged Havvoth-Jair, even the region of Argob &c.' This has the advantage of coupling with Havvoth-Jair the number 60 which plays such a part in the other passages quoted above.

In Judges x. 4 where the Havvoth-Jair are again mentioned, though they are connected with the history of the judge who was so called, yet there is nothing to indicate that the naming of the cities was due to him. As Jair the son of Manasseh first occupied these places, it is likely that his name would become a common one. The sons of Jair the judge held but half the number of the towns, but that is no evidence that the other thirty were then non-existent or that they were not also included in the name Havvoth-Jair, but in the hands of different governors.

in Gilead] Gilead is the name of that mountainous district, east of the Jordan, which had on the north the country of Bashan and on the south Moab and Ammon. Its chief towns were Ramoth-gilead and Jabesh-gilead. Sometimes also Jaazer is counted as belonging to it.

Argob] The district which in later times was called Trachonitis. (See Deut. iii. 4.)

Bashan] The country which lay immediately north of Gilead, and stretched northwards to Mount Hermon.

great cities with *walls and brasen bars*] The cities of this district are so described Deut. iii. 5, and there still are found in this neighbour-

Ahinadab the son of Iddo *had* Mahanaim: Ahimaaz *was* in 14
Naphtali; he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to 15
wife: Baanah the son of Hushai *was* in Asher and in Aloth: 16
Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar: Shimei the son 17
of Elah, in Benjamin: Geber the son of Uri *was* in the 18 19
country of Gilead, *in* the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan; and *he was* the only officer which *was* in the land. Judah and Israel *were* many, as the 20

hood ruins of walled cities (see Bunsen's *Bibelwerk* in loc.). As the armaments and modes of warfare were of a much more primitive character than in later times, we need not picture to ourselves from this description fortifications such as would now deserve the name.

14. had *Mahanaim*] The Hebrew is, as noted in the margin of A. V., 'to Mahanaim.' The change of construction is as though some verb = 'was appointed' had been in the mind of the writer for this one verse out of the list.

15. *Ahimaaz*] As no father's name is mentioned we may perhaps conclude that the well-known son of Zadok the priest is meant, who comes into historic notice at the time when David was fleeing before Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 27). His close connexion with the royal family would be likely to secure for him, if he sought it, a daughter of the king as his wife.

16. *Baanah*] The Hebrew orthography is the same as in verse 12. So read **Baana**. Here another son of his father's friend is cared for by Solomon. Hushai, father of Baana, was devoted to David's cause in the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 32) and it speaks well for Solomon that this devotion is not forgotten.

and in Aloth] We meet nowhere else with the name Aloth. The LXX. read Βααλώθ, which the Vulg. follows in *Baloth*. Hence the R. V. has given **and Bealoth** taking the initial ב not as a preposition = *in*, but as part of the proper name. The name does occur (Josh. xv. 24) but there it is of a place in the south of Judah. There may however have been another town or district so named elsewhere. The tribe of Asher, near to which this place must have been, lay on the sea-board, southward from Phœnicia, while Naphtali was to the east, and somewhat north, of it, above what in later times was the sea of Galilee.

17. *in Issachar*] The tribe of Zebulon came to the south of Naphtali, and south of this was Issachar. Jezreel and Gilboa were in this tribe.

18. *Elah*] The usual manner of transliteration requires **Ela**, like Baana in 16.

19. *in the country of Gilead*] Geber had the oversight of that part of Gilead which lay south of the district assigned to Ben-Geber (verse 13). This comprised all the kingdom of Sihon and part of the kingdom of Og (Deut. chh. ii. iii.), and was a very extensive province, but on account of its rugged character was probably thinly populated. The extent of it may account for the notice which follows that Geber was the *only* officer, though the country was so large.

sand which *is* by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry.

21 And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river *unto* the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the
22 days of his life. And Solomon's provision for one day was thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of

20. *eating and drinking, and making merry*] Words added to the description of the increased population to mark the great prosperity of the land. There was abundance everywhere, and none to make them afraid. Cf. below, verse 25.

21—28. EXTENT OF SOLOMON'S KINGDOM, THE PROVISION FOR HIS TABLE, HIS STUD. (Not in Chronicles.)

21. This verse in the Hebrew is the beginning of Chapter V., which has therefore 32 verses instead of 18 as in the English division. The LXX. and the Vulgate divide as in the A.V., but the former has a different order of the verses, putting after verse 19, the other verses as follows 27, 28, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34. Of verses 20, 21 and 25, 26 the LXX. has no notice, and adds a passage after 34, on which see note there.

over all kingdoms] The country was governed by a number of petty kings who all owned Solomon as their lord superior.

from the river] i.e. The River *par excellence*, viz. the Euphrates.

unto *the land of the Philistines*] There is no word for 'unto' in the sentence. It would seem best therefore to repeat the previous preposition, and render '*over* the land of the Philistines.' The first section of the verse will thus embrace the kingdoms to the north and east of Israel and Judah, the second those to the south and west. It should be mentioned that in 2 Chron. ix. 26 the preposition 'unto' is expressed in the Hebrew. The Vulgate here, in consequence of the absence of any preposition, translates 'a flumine terræ Philistiim.'

they brought presents] The noun is singular, and comprehends all that sort of offerings which tributaries rendered to their chief lord, but to which the more euphemious name of 'gift' or 'present' was assigned. Cp. for the character of these gifts 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6, where they are described as tribute from nations who became servants to king David; and in 2 Kings xvii. 4, we learn that they were presented year by year, and the failure in such service was ground enough for suspicion of conspiracy and for commencing war against the defaulter.

22. *measures*] The Hebrew word is *cor*. It is of the same capacity as the *homer*, and is used both as a liquid and a dry measure (see 1 Kings v. 11). It contained 10 *ephahs* in dry, and 10 *baths* in liquid measure. According to the Rabbins the cor contained nearly 45 gallons, but Josephus gives a different value and makes it to be equal to nearly 87 gallons. According to one estimate Solomon's dependants consumed about 1350 gallons of fine flour per day, according to the

meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and 23
an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallow-
deer, and fatted fowl. For he had dominion over all *the* 24
region on *this* side the river, from Tiphsah even to Azzah,
over all the kings on *this* side the river: and he had peace
on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt 25
safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from
Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon. And 26
Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots,

other about 2510 gallons, and twice as much meal. Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*) reckons 28000 lbs. of baked bread and concludes that the number of persons provided for was 15000.

23. *roebucks*] The Hebrew word (צְבִי) is rendered δορκὰς by the LXX. i.e. a gazelle. It is akin to the proper name Tabitha, i.e. Δορκὰς (Acts ix. 36). The rendering *roebuck* is better suited to the description of the next kind of animals mentioned and which A. V. translates *fallow deer*.

fatted fowl] The word rendered 'fowl,' is found only in this passage. The Chaldee paraphrase, as well as the Syriac and the Vulgate interpret it thus, so that we have full support from Jewish tradition. Kimchi thinks common fowls are meant. Gesenius, connecting the word with a root signifying *pure*, thinks geese or swans may be intended.

24. *on* this *side the river*] The side intended is of course here quite plain. It is the country west of the Euphrates towards Palestine. But the same Hebrew came to be used by those who were dwelling east of the Euphrates (cp. Ezra iv. 16; vi. 6; vii. 21, 25; viii. 36; Neh. ii. 7) when they spake of Palestine. So *Cisalpina* was used of Gaul south of the Alps, not only by those living there, but by those who lived on the other side of the Alpine range.

Tiphsah] i.e. Thapsacus on the west side of the river Euphrates. It was here that Cyrus crossed the river in the expedition of the Ten Thousand.

to Azzah] i.e. Gaza, one of the five famous cities of the Philistines toward the south of the Holy Land.

and he had peace on all sides] According to the promise implied in his name. See 1 Chron. xxii. 9 'His name shall be Solomon and I will give *peace* (shalom) and quietness unto Israel in his days.'

25. *Judah and Israel*] Clearly marked off from one another, though no separation had yet taken place.

under his vine and under his fig tree] A sort of proverbial description of a state of peace and prosperity. Cp. Micah iv. 4. On the contrary, for a scene of desolation we have (Joel i. 12) 'the vine is dried, and the fig tree languisheth.' Cp. also Hab. iii. 17.

26. *horses for his chariots*] This is one of the passages which make clear the meaning of the Hebrew *sus*, a horse to go in a chariot, and *parash*, a saddle-horse. In 2 Chron. ix. 25 the number of stalls is 4000 instead of 40000 as here.

27 and twelve thousand horsemen. And those officers provided victual for king Solomon, and for all that came unto king Solomon's table, every man *in* his month: they lacked
28 nothing. Barley also and straw for the horses and dromedaries brought they unto the place where *the officers* were, every man according to his charge.
29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, *even* as the sand that
30 *is* on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the
31 wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men; than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda,

27. *And those officers*] Referring to the twelve enumerated in verses 8—19. There is a degree of awkwardness in the way in which the fresh mention of them is introduced, and this no doubt led to the transposition in the LXX. which has been noticed above.

they lacked nothing] Rather, 'they let nothing be missing.' The notion of the verb is that of *inspecting* troops, and marking, and at once correcting, deficiencies.

28. *unto the place where* the officers *were*] As shewn by the italics of A. V. there is no word in the original for 'the officers.' The verb moreover is in the singular. It is better therefore to render with the margin of R. V. 'where he (i.e. the king) was' or 'where it should be.'

29—34. THE WISDOM AND FAME OF SOLOMON. (Not in Chronicles.)

29. *largeness of heart*] By this is meant a comprehensive powerful mind capable of grasping the knowledge of many and difficult subjects; poetry, philosophy, natural history in its various branches; he was master of them all.

as the sand that is *on the sea shore*] The proverbial expression for greatness of every kind. See above verse 20.

30. *the children of the east country*] i.e. The Chaldæans and Arabians who from early times were noted for their astrological investigations and for their wisdom. Job is spoken of as among these children of the east (Job i. 3) and the character of their wisdom and scientific learning may be gathered in some degree from the speeches of his friends. Pythagoras is said to have visited Arabia and derived from thence some of the precepts of his philosophy. From the same quarter came 'the wise men' unto Bethlehem when Christ was born (Matt. ii. 1).

wisdom of Egypt] We read of 'the wise men and sorcerers' of Pharaoh as early as Exod. vii. 11, and 'the wise men of Egypt' are mentioned (Gen. xli. 8) in the history of Joseph, and the tradition of Egyptian wisdom is noticed in Stephen's speech (Acts vii. 22).

31. *Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman*] Ethan and Heman are among the names of the singers (1 Chron. xv. 19) appointed by David when

the sons of Mahol: and his fame was in all nations round about. And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his 32
songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, 33

the ark was brought up to the city of David, but there is no possibility of deciding whether those are the men alluded to here. In 1 Chronicles (xv. 17) Ethan is called the son of Kushaiah, and the son of Kishi (1 Chron. vi. 44), and Heman is, in the latter chapter (verse 33), called the son of Joel. See the next note.

Chalcol] The better orthography is **Calcol** which A.V. gives for the same name in 1 Chron. ii. 6. In that passage we find (with a slight modification of the last) the four names of this verse all mentioned as sons of Zerah, the son of Judah. These would therefore be great-grandsons of Jacob. The difference between the name Darda דרדע and Dara דרע (of 1 Chron. ii. 6) may be due only to a slip of the transcriber. But no tradition has survived which tells of the special wisdom of this family, nor can we connect the name *Mahol*, as the father of some of them at least is here called, with *Zerah*. But the occurrence of the four names together in one family inclines to the opinion that these men were the men spoken of here. Their fame, even if not at first great, may have grown so during the time between Judah and Solomon.

in all nations] We know that it had reached the queen of Sheba. See chap. x.

32. *three thousand proverbs*] Of which some are contained in the book of Proverbs to which his name is given, but these are not all his, nor would all that are attributed to him there approach the number in the text. The proverb (מֹשָׁל) of the Hebrews was, as we see from those preserved, more of the character of a parable, or wise comparison, than what we commonly call by that name.

his songs] No doubt some of these were preserved, though not included in the Canon of Scripture, and their character is perhaps impressed upon the Song, which is called of Solomon, that has come down to us. The LXX. makes the number of the songs to be 5000; Josephus agrees with the Hebrew text. We need not suppose that these songs were of a sacred character. Psalms lxxii. and cxxvii. are (if we be consistent in translating the preposition) ascribed to Solomon in their titles, but the titles are of small authority, and in the latter case the LXX. omits the ascription to Solomon. Ewald thinks the second Psalm may be one of Solomon's composition. Dean Perowne, thinking it probable that Solomon made a collection of his father's poetry for the service of the Temple, attributes the first Psalm to him. The sententious and somewhat proverbial character of the language gives support to this opinion.

33. *And he spake*] i.e. He gave descriptions of the whole vegetable world, and discussed the virtues of the various plants. For it has been always of their medicinal properties that the earliest works on plants have treated. They were the remedies for all diseases, and a knowledge of 'simples,' as they were called in England in old times, was counted for the highest wisdom.

from the cedar tree that *is* in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and
34 of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom.
5 And Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants unto Solomon;

the cedar] The tree of greatest glory in Palestine is named as one extreme of the vegetable world, and the hyssop on the wall as the other.

of beasts] Similarly, under the names of beasts, fowls, creeping things and fishes, the whole animal world is specified after the division of those times. The same classes are mentioned in the account of the creation. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 2, 5) enlarges on the simple narrative of the text, telling how the king's knowledge of the peculiarities of these various creatures was of the most thorough character. He then goes on to tell that he was endowed with power against demons, and could cure men who were possessed with evil spirits. He is also said to have left forms of incantation and exorcism, of which, Josephus says, some knowledge had come down to his own time, and he gives a story of a Jew who wrought such a cure as he describes in the presence of the emperor Vespasian.

34. *from all kings of the earth*] It is most likely that what is meant is that embassies were sent from various kingdoms. The visit of the queen of Sheba (chap. x.) is preserved to us probably as one of the more distant visits, and made, as could not often be the case, by the monarch in person.

Here the LXX. (*Vat.*) adds some words which partly repeat iii. 1 'And Solomon took to him the daughter of Pharaoh to wife, and brought her into the city of David until he had finished the house of the Lord, and his own house and the wall of Jerusalem.' After this follows from ix. 16 'Then Pharaoh king of Egypt went up and took Gazer, and set fire to it, and the Canaanite that dwelt in Mergab. And Pharaoh gave them as presents to his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon built up Gazer.' At ix. 16 the Vatican text omits the words inserted here. It seems as though a change of order had been made that the wedding presents (ἀποστολὰς) might be mentioned at an earlier part of the narrative.

CH. V. 1—12. PREPARATIONS OF TIMBER AND STONE FOR SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. LEAGUE BETWEEN SOLOMON AND HIRAM KING OF TYRE. (2 Chron. ii. 3—16.)

1. *Hiram king of Tyre*] The name of this king is spelt *Hirom* below in verses 10 and 18, and in 2 Chron. ii. 3 *Huram*. From the words of the latter narrative we should conclude that it was the same king who had ruled in Tyre in the days of David, to whom he is said to have sent timber for the building of his own house. Cp. 2 Sam. v. 11. But the events alluded to in Samuel were as it seems in the early

for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father: for Hiram was ever a lover of David.
2 And Solomon sent to Hiram, saying,
3 Thou knowest how that David my father could not build a house unto the name of the LORD his God for the wars which were about him on

part of David's reign in Jerusalem, that is, between 30 and 40 years before the preparations spoken of in the present verse. It may therefore be that two kings in succession bore the same name, and this view is confirmed by 2 Chron. ii. 13.

sent his servants unto Solomon] Seemingly with a message of congratulation on his accession. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 2, 6) says so. 'He saluted and congratulated him on his present prosperity.' The Syriac has a clause to the same effect. The LXX. very strangely says 'he sent his servants to anoint (χρῖσαι) Solomon in the room of David.' Hiram was no doubt the greatest independent prince near the land of Israel, but there is no trace of any authority of the Tyrian kings over Israel.

Hiram was ever a lover of David] (Cf. 2 Sam. v. 11.) If this be not the same person as the Hiram in David's reign, Hiram must be taken here merely as a synonym for the king of Tyre, just as Pharaoh is often for the king of Egypt.

2. *Solomon sent to Hiram*] Josephus (*l. c.*) says that the message was by letter, as was also Hiram's answer. That Hiram wrote his reply is mentioned 2 Chron. ii. 11. Josephus also states that copies of these two letters still remained not only preserved in the Jewish records, but also among the Tyrians so that anybody wishing to test his statements might, if he wished, refer to them.

3. *Thou knowest*] David's preparations must have been well known throughout the Phœnician kingdom, and so to Hiram even though he was not himself king. Cf. 1 Chron. xxii. 4 where we are told that the Zidonians and they of Tyre brought much cedar wood to David. The reason why David himself did not begin to build the temple may also have been known to the northern king.

could not build a house] He was forbidden to do this by the word of the Lord (cf. 1 Chron. xxii. 8; xxviii. 3) because he had shed blood abundantly and made great wars.

unto the name of the Lord] See above on iii. 2.

for the wars which were about him] The concord in this clause is not strictly grammatical, the noun rendered 'wars' being singular while the verb which follows is plural. It has therefore been proposed to render 'because of the war wherewith they (i.e. his enemies) surrounded him.' It seems better however to consider the singular noun as equivalent to a plural = *enemies*. And thus the rendering of the A. V. gives the correct sense. Another solution proposed has been to consider the words 'men of' as fallen out before 'war,' thus making the sense 'because of the men of war who encompassed him.' But such emendation of the text has no support in the versions.

every side, until the LORD put them under the soles of his
4 feet. But now the LORD my God hath given me rest on
every side, *so that there is* neither adversary nor evil occur-
5 rent. And behold, I purpose to build a house unto the
name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spake unto David
my father, saying, Thy son, whom I will set upon thy throne
6 in thy room, he shall build a house unto my name. Now
therefore command thou that they hew me cedar trees out
of Lebanon; and my servants shall be with thy servants:

put them under the soles of his feet] A phrase not uncommon to denote entire conquest. Cf. Ps. viii. 6; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22.

4. *rest on every side*] Cf. above iv. 24.

evil occurrent] 'Occurrent' is the old English form of the noun for which we now use 'occurrence.' Cf. Bacon *Henry VII.* (*Pitt Press Series*) p. 68. 'He paid the king large tribute of his gratitude in diligent advertisement of the *occurrents* of Italy.' Probably the A.V. rendering is due to the Vulgate, which has *occursus malus*.

5. *I purpose*] The verb in the original is that usually rendered 'to say.' It is similarly used 2 Sam. xxi. 16. 'He *thought* to have slain David.' It means 'he said he would.'

to build a house]. It should be noticed that between the narrative in Kings and Chronicles there is a marked difference here. The former says nothing about the preparations which David had made for building the Temple, but makes the preparation commence under Solomon. In Chronicles David is represented as making great preparations before his death. Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 6—9; 2 Chron. ii. 3—7 and with 1 Kings vi. 2 compare 2 Chron. iii. 3.

as the Lord spake] Cf. 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. In that passage no mention is made of the reason why David was not permitted to build.

6. *Now therefore command thou*] Solomon's request is much expanded in 2 Chron. ii. 3—10, where he asks for a cunning workman in gold and other metals, and in purple, crimson and blue, and skilled in carving or engraving. He desires also much other wood beside cedar, Of the Sidonian purple we have frequent notices in Classical authors, it is 'the grain of Sarra worn by Kings and heroes old,' as Milton sings of it. *Par. Lost* XI. 242. Cf. Verg. *Æn.* IV. 137 'Sidoniam picto chlamydem circumdata limbo.' Homer tells us of the great skill of Sidonian workmen: the embroidered robes of Andromache and the bowl given by Achilles as a prize at the games in honour of Patroclus were of Sidonian workmanship. (Hom. *Il.* vi. 290; xxiii. 743, 744.)

cedar-trees out of Lebanon] We see from Hiram's answer in verse 8 where 'timber of fir' is added to the 'timber of cedar' that we have here only an abstract of Solomon's request, and the fuller form in Chronicles has probably been drawn from an original authority.

hire for thy servants] The hire takes the form of a supply of corn and oil of which the kingdom of Solomon was very productive.

and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants according to all that thou shalt appoint: for thou knowest that *there is* not among us any *that* can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians. And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the 7
words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly, and said, Blessed *be* the LORD *this* day, which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people. And Hiram sent to Solo- 8
mon, saying, I have considered *the things* which thou sentest to me *for: and* I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir. My servants shall 9
bring *them* down from Lebanon unto the sea: and I will

can skill] This somewhat antiquated word is found also 2 Chron. ii. 7, 8; xxxiv. 12. It means 'to know the best way of doing anything.' Cf. Holland *Pliny* XVIII. 10. 'Without beans they cannot *skill* how to dress anything for their daily food.'

7. *he rejoiced greatly*] For the alliance thus offered to him was that of the mightiest prince of all those round about.

Blessed be *the Lord*] Hiram here uses the name of Jehovah in such wise as to shew that he acknowledged him as a true god, but probably only in the sense of being the national god of Israel, as Melcarth was of the Zidonians. Cf. the queen of Sheba's words of the same kind in x. 9. In the words of Hiram as given in 2 Chron. i. 12, Jehovah is said to be the Maker of heaven and earth. If this were really Hiram's language he must have identified Jehovah with his own supreme divinity. Of course it was no difficulty for a heathen to add the name of another divinity to his list of gods. Melchizedek (Gen. xiv. 19) speaks of 'God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth'; and though not a heathen, he was outside the chosen race.

8. *and Hiram sent to Solomon*] The Chronicler says he answered in writing.

I have considered the things *which thou sentest to me* for] More literally (see R.V.): '**I have heard** the message **which thou sentest to me.**' We need not with this literal rendering suppose Solomon's to have been a verbal request.

There is also no need to insert the conjunction before the next clause (as in A.V.), Render, as in R.V., 'I will do.'

concerning timber of fir] Josephus says 'cypress' and from the uses to which the wood is put, that seems the more probable rendering. Beside being employed in the Temple building, the tree בְּרוֹשׁ (*b'rósh*) is used in shipbuilding (Ez. xxvii. 5), for spear shafts (Nah. ii. 4), and for musical instruments (2 Sam. vi. 5). It was a tall tree on which storks built their nests.

The LXX. has πεύκινος = pine wood, the Vulgate *ligna abiegna*, to which, no doubt, the 'firwood' of A.V. is due.

9. *from Lebanon unto the sea*] Providing for the shortest land passage down the side of the mountain and to the coast of the Mediterranean.

convey them by sea *in* flotes unto the place that thou shalt appoint me, and will cause them to be discharged there, and thou shalt receive *them:* and thou shalt accomplish my de-
10 sire, in giving food for my household. So Hiram gave Solomon cedar trees and fir trees *according to* all his desire.
11 And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of

Probably Sidon itself would be as convenient a place as any to which to bring the timber down. We learn from Josephus (c. Apion I. 18) that Hiram was quite experienced in this work. On his accession he had done much for the adornment of Tyre, especially in its sacred buildings and it is said of him ὕλην ξύλων ἀπελθὼν ἔκοψεν ἀπὸ τοῦ λεγομένου ὄρους Λιβάνου, κέδρινα ξύλα εἰς τὰς τῶν ἱερῶν στέγας, καθελών τε τὰ ἀρχαῖα ἱερὰ καινοὺς (*sic*) ᾠκοδόμησε.

in *flotes*] There is no preposition in the original. The idea probably would be more nearly expressed by '*as* flotes.' R.V. **I will make them into rafts to go by sea.** The flotes would be made of the trees fastened side by side, and formed into long raftlike structures, somewhat like those which may be seen often on the Rhine, sent down from Switzerland. Such flotes would keep close to the shore and be anchored at night. In this way they might easily be brought along the coasts of Phœnicia and the Holy Land.

unto the place] The Chronicler (2 Chron. ii. 16) makes mention of the name, Joppa. This would be the most convenient port for Jerusalem, and at that point the wood was to be delivered to Solomon's officers. The compiler of the Kings of course knew where the timber had been delivered, but as it was not recorded in his authority he made no mention of it.

thou shalt appoint] The word is not the same as that so rendered in verse 6. The literal sense is 'to send' but it is often used of 'sending a message' without the addition of any object. Thus in xxi. 11, 'They did as Jezebel had sent unto them.' Cf. 2 Kings xvi. 11.

thou shalt accomplish my desire] Josephus explains why a supply of such provisions as Solomon proposed to give would be most acceptable to the Tyrian monarch, making him say in his letter, ὅπως δὲ καὶ σὺ παράσχῃς ἡμῖν ἀντὶ τούτων σῖτον, οὗ διὰ τὸ νῆσον οἰκεῖν δεόμεθα, φρόντισον. The Tyrians were a maritime people, living on an island near a mountainous shore, and so with no chance of getting food supplies from their own land.

10. *cedar trees and fir trees*] The words are exactly the same as in verse 8, so we had better read here 'timber of cedar &c.' On 'fir' see above.

11. *And Solomon gave Hiram*] The supply mentioned by the Chronicler (2 Chron. ii. 10) is more than what is here stated. There the payment is 20,000 measures of beaten wheat, 20,000 measures of barley, 20,000 baths of wine and 20,000 baths of oil. Josephus mentions wheat, wine and oil, but says nothing about barley. There appears to be some clerical error in respect of the oil in this verse. The twenty measures

wheat *for* food to his household, and twenty measures of pure oil: thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year. And 12
the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him: and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon; and they two made a league *together*.

And king Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel; and the 13
levy was thirty thousand men. And he sent them to Leba- 14
non, ten thousand a month *by* courses: a month they were in Lebanon, *and* two months at home: and Adoniram *was* over the levy. And Solomon had threescore and ten thou- 15

(here *cor*) would only be equal to 200 baths, which seems a small quantity compared with the amount of wheat.

pure oil] Literally 'beaten.' It is the word used for describing the specially pure oil provided for the ever burning lamp in the tabernacle (Exod. xxvii. 20). It was made by pounding the olives in a mortar, and letting such oil as was thus extracted trickle out. The coarser oil was obtained by the use of the oilpress.

year by year] i.e. During the period in which the work was carried on.

12. *they two made a league*] The friendship was a close one, as may be seen from ix. 13, where Hiram calls Solomon 'my brother.' It is probable that this alliance between Tyre and the successors of Solomon continued, even when the kingdoms of Israel and Judah were separated. Jezebel, Ahab's wife, was a daughter of the Tyrian king Ethbaal.

13—18. SOLOMON'S LEVY OF FORCED LABOURERS FOR THE WORK ON LEBANON. (2 Chron. ii. 1—2 and 17—18.)

13. *a levy*] The men selected had to give their labour. Such compulsory service has been a not unusual demand of Oriental monarchs. If we take the census of the people as it is given in 2 Sam. xxiv. 9 we find that the 30,000 labourers required for this work were rather more than 2 per cent. of the numbers given in by Joab to David. Of course this levy only lasted so long as the work on Lebanon was in hand. The levy of bondservice mentioned in ix. 21 was of a different kind. The strangers there spoken of were made perpetually to do forced labour. Josephus considers the present levy to have been no hardship. He says that Solomon ἄπονον τὴν ἐργασίαν κατέστησε. And probably the object for which the work was done would lend some enthusiasm to the labourers. Samuel (1 Sam. viii. 16) had given the people warning that their kings would make such demands upon their service.

14. by *courses*] The word is that which is used of 'changes' of raiment. These men came and went away by 'turns.'

Adoniram] See iv. 6. Josephus gives to this man the name Ἀδώραμος; he does not give a list to correspond with that in iv. 2—6.

15. *threescore and ten thousand that bare burdens*] The Chronicler (2 Chron. ii. 17) points out that these 70,000 were of the strangers that dwelt in the land of Israel. These the king compelled to do the harder

sand that bare burdens, and fourscore thousand hewers in
16 the mountains; besides the chief of Solomon's officers
which *were* over the work, three thousand and three hundred, which ruled over the people that wrought in the work.
17 And the king commanded, and they brought great stones, costly stones, *and* hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the

and more menial work, and the whole number of these non-Israelites was called out for work. Their number is stated in Chronicles to have been 153,600; of these 70,000 were bearers of burdens, 80,000 hewers in the mountains and the other 3600 (see Chronicles *l. c.*) were overseers to set the people a-work.

16. *three thousand and three hundred*] This number differs by 300 from that given in the Chronicles. If the total of the census of the strangers there given be correct, then we ought to read 3600 as the number of the overseers. The LXX. has τρεῖς χιλιάδες καὶ ἑξακόσιοι, and adds that they were employed for 3 years in preparing the stones and the wood.

The stone work was most probably given to the levy of strangers and the work of cutting and dressing timber to the 10,000 Israelites who came month and month about. The word rendered 'hewers' in verse 15 is so regularly used of workers in stone, that the LXX. nearly always renders the verb by λατομέω and its participle by λατόμοι (stone cutters).

which ruled over the people] The root-sense of the verb, which is 'to trample on,' or 'break down,' gives the idea that the ruling was after the fashion of taskmasters.

17. *they brought*] The verb is used most frequently of pulling up tent pegs when removing a tent. And it is hardly found with the mere sense of 'bringing' or 'bearing.' Therefore in this passage and in Eccl. x. 9, the R. V. has given it (with the authority of the Targum) the meaning 'to hew out.' In the latter passage this rendering is certainly more appropriate and in harmony with the parallel clause, 'Whoso *heweth out* stones shall be hurt therewith, and he that cleaveth wood is endangered thereby.' Here too, the sense 'they **hewed out** great stones' fits the passage extremely well.

costly stones] The adjective is not unfrequently used of gems which are of great price; as, of the precious stones in the crown of the Ammonite king (2 Sam. xiii. 30). But in the present case the costly nature was due to the care and pains which had been taken in selecting and working these foundation stones. This seems to be the sense in such passages as Isaiah xxviii. 16, where the worth consists in the stability and tried nature of the stone spoken of.

and *hewed stones*] As will be seen from the A. V. there is no conjunction expressed in the original. The rendering however which is given leads the reader to suppose that there stands another adjective in the Hebrew like those rendered 'great' and 'costly.' This is not so, and moreover the order of the words makes it clear that the words rendered 'hewed stones' should follow 'to lay the foundation of the house.'

house. And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did 18
hew *them*, and the stonesquarers: so they prepared timber
and stones to build the house.

And it came to pass in the four hundred and eighty 6
year after the children of Israel were come out of the land

Hence the R. V. has **to lay the foundation of the house with wrought stone.**

18. *and the stonesquarers*] The text of A.V. is due to the Targum, which translates by 'masons'. But the margin of A. V. suggests that the word is not a common but a proper noun and gives 'Giblites' as in Ezek. xxvii. 9. This is certainly a much more natural combination, than to class along with the men of Solomon and the men of Hiram, the stone squarers as of a different order. In Ezekiel the men of Gebal are spoken of as skilled in caulking ships, and they were not improbably able handicraftsmen in other branches. Josephus gives us no help. He speaks merely of 'workmen whom Hiram sent.' But the Vulgate reads 'Giblii' as a proper name and in many MSS. *Biblii* or *Byblii*. In the Vatican LXX. the verse is left out, but the Alexandrine gives καὶ οἱ Βίβλιοι. Now Gebal was a Phœnician city not far from the sea coast, to the north of Berytus (*Beyrout*). The Greeks called it Byblos, but the name is found also spelt Βίβλος (Zosim. i. 58; Ezek. xxvii. 9. LXX.). Thus the LXX. supports the proper name, which, to keep clear that it means the people of Gebal, we ought to write '**the Gebalites.**' This has been adopted by R.V.

Ch. VI. 1—10. Commencement and dimensions of Solomon's Temple. (2 Chron. iii. 1—2.)

1. *in the four hundred and eightieth year*, &c.] It is impossible to discover how this date is arrived at, or to make it fit in with other statements of the Old and New Testament. The LXX. has 'the four hundred and fortieth year', and Josephus 'the five hundred and ninety second.' If we put together the numbers which we find in the Old Testament record, we have 40 years between the Exodus and the death of Moses, 40 years peace after Othniel, 80 after Ehud; Jabin's oppression lasted 20 years, there were 40 years of peace after Barak, 40 in Gideon's time: Tola judged the land 23 years, Jair 22, Jephthah 6, Ibzan 7, Elon 10, Abdon 8: the servitude to the Philistines lasted 40 years, and Samson judged 20 years. After this we have as dates Eli 40 years, Samuel 20 (1 Sam. vii. 2) at least, David 40, Solomon 4. These make a total of 500. But we cannot be sure that some of these judgeships were not contemporary with or overlapping one another, while there is no time specified for the duration of Joshua's leadership, and for the events between his death and the judgeship of Othniel, nor yet again for the reign of Saul. So that it is utterly hopeless to settle any chronology under such circumstances. Moreover the frequent occurrence of the round number 40 gives the impression that no attempt has been made to fix accurate dates for any of the periods mentioned. Then in

of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which *is* the second month, that he *began* to
2 build the house of the LORD. And the house which king Solomon built for the LORD, the length thereof *was* three-score cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty *cubits*, and the

Judges xi. 26 we read that from the conquest of Gilead down to the time of Jephthah was 300 years. Taking the other dates in sequence this would make the period in the text consist of 529 years without counting the length of Saul's reign. Once more (Acts xiii. 20) according to the *Text. Rec.* there elapsed, between the partition of the land under Joshua and the days of Samuel, a period of 450 years. Adding to this the other numbers and 40 years for the reign of Saul, according to the chronology which St Paul used, we reach a total of 554. But we have no data whereby to confirm or contradict any of these totals.

It is most likely that the 440 years of the LXX. was arrived at by adding together the years assigned to the several judges and omitting the other events, the oppression of Jabin, and of the Philistines. This makes a total 296 years, which with 40 years for the sojourn in the desert, and 104 between Eli and the 4th year of Solomon brings the total to 440.

Origen on John ii. 20 quotes from this verse and omits the words which refer to the time between the Exodus and the building of the Temple. Yet as these words are represented in the LXX. but would have given no point to Origen's comment, it appears more probable that he omitted them on purpose, than that, since his day, these words have been added to the Massoretic text.

in the fourth year of Solomon's reign] This accounts for the mention in the LXX., at the end of the last chapter, that they spent three years in preparing the stone and timber.

in the month Zif] This name for the month is found only here and in verse 37 below. So that it appears not to have been the usual one. The word means 'brightness', 'splendour', and the Targum explains it of 'the bloom of flowers' at the time. It is said to have been between the new moon of May and that of June, though some place it a month earlier. A later name, Iyar, for the second month is found in the Targum on 2 Chron. xxx. 2, and Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 3. 1) gives it as Ἰάρ here.

he began *to build*] This is a translation required by the sense. The Hebrew says simply 'he built.' In 2 Chron. iii. 1, the Hebrew is expressly 'he began to build.' Hence the rendering here.

2. *the length thereof* was *threescore cubits*] In dimension the Temple was twice the size of the Tabernacle. The latter was 30 cubits long, 10 cubits wide and 15 cubits high in the holy place. See Fergusson's *Temples of the Jews*, p. 16. Mr Fergusson, speaking of the length of the cubit says, 'we find that a cubit of 18 English inches meets all the difficulties of the case with as much accuracy as can be obtained.' We see then that the Temple, exclusive of the rooms by which it was sur-

height thereof thirty cubits. And the porch before the 3
temple of the house, twenty cubits *was* the length thereof,
according to the breadth of the house; *and* ten cubits *was*
the breadth thereof before the house. And for the house 4
he made windows of narrow lights. And against the wall of 5

rounded, was but a very small building, 90 feet long, 30 feet broad, and 45 feet high in its loftiest portion, and the Tabernacle only half that size. Neither building was meant to contain the worshippers. The priests went in, while the multitude remained outside (cf. Luke i. 9, 10).

An interesting paper on Solomon's Temple, by Mr E. C. Robins, F.S.A., will be found in 'The Builder' of Jan. 9 and 16, 1886.

It appears from verse 27 below, where the wings of the cherubim touch each other and also touch the walls of the most holy place, that the measures mentioned in this account of the Temple are measures of the interior, and that allowance must be made for the thickness of the outside walls in any calculation of the size of the building.

3. *the porch*] This extended along the whole face of the building, and projected forward 10 cubits, thus making the whole length of the structure 70 cubits or 105 feet, without allowing for the thickness of outside or party walls. The height of this porch is said (2 Chron. iii. 4) to have been 120 cubits. This height = 180 ft. is out of proportion to the other dimensions, and Mr Robins suggests that, after his manner, the Chronicler has added together the 4 dimensions in height of the 4 sides of the porch, and that the true height was 30 cubits. That the Chronicler does put down his numbers in this strange fashion is shewn from 2 Chron. iii. 11, where he first writes 'the wings of the cherubim were twenty cubits long.' He afterwards explains that he means each of the 4 wings was 5 cubits long, but left alone the first statement would be misleading. In the same manner the pillars which in 1 Kings vii. 15; Jer. lii. 17 are said to be each 18 cubits high, are described in 2 Chron. iii. 15 as 'two pillars of thirty and five cubits high'. Where it is suggested that the two heights given in Kings are added together.

the temple of the house] This means the holy place. Cf. below verse 17, where it is called 'the temple before the oracle.' The 'oracle' is the special name for the most holy place.

4. *windows of narrow lights*] It is not easy to explain the nature of these windows from the words used to describe them. They were apparently windows made by overlaid woodwork, either in the fashion of sloping louvre boards or fashioned like latticework crosswise. Then the last word indicates that they were closed in some way or other. Hence the margins of the A.V. 'windows broad *within and* narrow *without*' or 'skewed *and* closed.' The former of these margins the R.V. has preserved, but gives in the text **windows of fixed latticework**, taking the word 'closed' to imply the permanent nature of the woodwork in the apertures. These windows were in the wall, above the roof of the chambers which are described in the next verse, and must have been of the nature of the clerestory windows which overlook the aisles of a

the house he built chambers round about, *against* the walls of the house round about, *both* of the temple and of the
6 oracle: and he made chambers round about: the nethermost chamber *was* five cubits broad, and the middle *was* six cubits broad, and the third *was* seven cubits broad: for without *in the wall* of the house he made narrowed rests

church. There could have been only very little light from them, but the building was lighted artificially.

5. *And against the wall of the house he built chambers*] The A.V. points out by its margin that the word here translated 'chambers' is not the same as that so rendered in the latter part of the verse. For the former it gives 'floors' as an alternative, for the latter 'ribs.' The first seems to embrace the whole structure and the latter to describe single rows of the same. What Solomon erected was three stories (as given by R.V.) of small chambers running all round two sides and one end of the Temple. The floors of these were supported on the stone work of the main building in the way described in the next verse, but were not let into the Temple-building. That wall was intact. The R.V. gives **he built stories round about**. Of this environment of chambers the Chronicler makes no mention.

both *of the temple and of the oracle*] i.e. Of the holy place and of the most holy place. The whole erection was enclosed on three sides in a casework of chambers.

and he made chambers round about] The R.V. has **side chambers**. This word seems to refer to the several floors one above another which formed this casework of chambers. There were three stories, each five cubits high. The Scripture record does not tell us into how many chambers each floor was divided. Josephus says there were thirty in all, he also states that they were reached by going through one to another, καὶ τὰς εἰσόδους αὐτοῖς δι' ἀλλήλων κατεσκεύασεν.

6. *The nethermost chamber* (R.V. **story**) was *five cubits broad*] This is the space between the wall of the Temple and the outer wall of the enclosing structure. The wall of the Temple must have been very thick at the bottom, for at the height of five cubits a ledge was made of one cubit wide on which to rest the floor work of the middle chambers. Then after five cubits more, a similar ledge received the floor-beams of the third story, and then at the height of 15 cubits came a third ledge, or rebatement, on which the beams of the roof of the uppermost story were to be supported. The wall of the Temple (i.e. the holy place) then rose 15 cubits more, and in this space were the windows. If we allow two cubits for the thickness of this upper part of the wall, the foot of the Temple wall must have been five cubits thick. Each story of the side chambers was one cubit more in width than the one below it.

for without in the wall *of the house he made narrowed rests round about*] R.V. **for on the outside he made rebatements in the wall of the house.** 'Rebatements' is taken from the margin of the A.V., and is the technical word for these shoulders in the wall of the Temple on which the floors and roof of each story were to rest with one end, while

round about, that *the beams* should not be fastened in the walls of the house. And the house, when it was in building, 7
was built *of* stone made ready *before it was* brought *thither:*
so that there was neither hammer nor axe *nor* any tool of
iron heard in the house, while it was in building. The door 8
for the middle chamber *was* in the right side of the house:

the other end was built into the outer wall of this encircling frame of chambers.

that the beams *should not be fastened*] R.V. **should not have hold.** The Temple building was more sacred than these chambers, which were meant for the use, or habitation of the priests. Hence there must be no breach made in the wall of either the holy place or of the most holy place. We read of 'a chamber' attached to the Temple (the Hebrew word is not the same as is used here) in the account of Tobiah (Nehem. xiii. 5). The use of it had been for storing the meat-offerings, frankincense, the sacred vessels and the tithes-in-kind which were given to the Levites. We have 'chambers' in the house of the Lord also noticed in Jerem. xxxvi. 10, 20. These seem to have been used as dwelling-rooms.

7. *stone made ready* before it was *brought* thither] The R.V. renders **made ready at the quarry** with a margin on the last three words 'when it was brought away.' The final Hebrew word מַסָּע on which the various reading is given is from the root of the verb rendered doubly in v. 17 'to hew' or 'to bring away.' The best authorities incline to make it a noun signifying 'the place of hewing,' 'the stone-quarry.' The LXX. gives λίθοις ἀκροτόμοις, which implies that the stones were made of their necessary shape at the quarry. The idea of this preparation at a distance, so that there might be as little noise as possible while the building was in progress, was probably derived from the command (Ex. xx. 25; Deut. xxvii. 5) that no iron tool should be used in the erection of the altar. This previous exact preparation must have made the transport a matter of serious care.

On the Jewish fables about the worm 'Shamir' by which Solomon caused the stones to be cut, see Buxtorf, *Lex. Chald.* p. 2455 s.v. שָׁמִיר.

8. *The door for the middle chamber*] R.V. **middle side-chambers.** The LXX. and Targum here give 'lowest' instead of 'middle;' doubtless because otherwise there is no mode of access to the lower side-chambers specified. The manner of reaching the middle story is sufficiently indicated in the next clause. On the contrary the compiler of Kings may have considered that there was no need to mention any entrance to the lower row of chambers. That would be a matter of course, and there may have been more than one, but the place and way of reaching the other two flights of rooms did need notice. There may also have been some access from the lowest side chambers into the Temple, if these chambers were used for storing the sacred oil and other provisions for the service.

in the right side of the house] The word rendered 'side' is literally

and they went up with winding stairs into the middle *cham-*
9 *ber*, and out of the middle into the third. So he built the
house, and finished it; and covered the house with beams
10 and boards of cedar. And *then* he built chambers against
all the house, five cubits high: and they rested on the house
with timber of cedar.
11 And the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying,

shoulder, and may indicate that part of the building nearest the porch, which would be considered the face of the Temple.

9. *So he built the house*] i.e. The Temple building. The next verse speaks of the enclosing framework of chambers. What was now finished was the portion for divine service.

and covered the house] i.e. Made the roof for it. On this roof, see Fergusson, *Temples of the Jews*, pp. 19 seqq., where the author shews that the covering of the Tabernacle was made with a ridge and sloped to both sides, and that the cedar beams and boards (R.V. **planks**) spoken of in this verse were to imitate, as nearly as could be done in wood, the Tabernacle roof. Mr Fergusson has suggested (p. 28) that there were most probably pillars inside the Temple to support the beams of the roof. 'No cedar beams that were available could be laid across an opening 30 feet free without sagging to an unpleasant extent.'

10. *And* then *he built chambers against all the house, five cubits high*] Better with R.V. 'And he built **the stories** against all the house, **each** five cubits high.' We ought perhaps to make some allowance for the thickness of floors and roofs. So that the whole height to which this three-storied structure rose may have been much more than 15 cubits, if five cubits were the inside height of each range of rooms. Mr Fergusson (p. 27) says 'It hardly admits of dispute that with the requisite thickness of their roofs they make up the 20 or 21 cubits which are necessary to bring up their roofs to the level of that of the Holy of Holies.'

they rested on the house] i.e. On the shoulders or rebatements mentioned in verse 6. The other ends of these cedar beams were embedded in the outside wall of the encasing story-work.

11—13. GOD'S PROMISE TO SOLOMON AND TO THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

11. *And the word of the Lord came*] The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits these three verses, as if intending to bring the whole narrative of the building into closer connexion.

We are not told by what means this divine communication was made, whether in a vision, or through Nathan the prophet, as the original message came to David (2 Sam. vii. 4). It is a message in the genuine prophetic spirit. The Temple has no value of its own, except so far as it is the sign and witness of *obedience* to Jehovah.

Concerning this house which thou art in building, if thou 12
wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgements, and
keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I
perform my word with thee, which I spake unto David thy
father: and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and 13
will not forsake my people Israel.

So Solomon built the house, and finished it. And he 14, 15
built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar,
both the floor of the house, and the walls of the cieling: *and*
he covered *them* on the inside with wood, and covered the
floor of the house with planks of fir. And he built twenty 16

12. *which thou art in building*] It is clear from this that the message came before the completion of the house, and that this is the proper place for its mention, from whatever source the compiler drew it.

I will perform my word] R.V. 'I will **establish**.' See above on ii. 4.

which I spake unto David] See 2 Sam. vii. 12—17.

13. *and I will dwell among the children of Israel*] This is an expansion of the promise made to David. The same words are used (Exod. xxix. 45) in connexion with the furnishing and completion of the tabernacle. As God's presence in both Tabernacle and Temple was to point on to the Incarnation, the fitness of the phrase on both occasions is manifest.

and will not forsake my people Israel] The threat that God would do so, if Israel were disobedient, is found Deut. xxxi. 17.

14—22. PARTICULARS OF THE INTERIOR FITTINGS OF THE HOLY PLACE, AND OF THE MOST HOLY PLACE. (2 Chron. iii. 5—9.)

14. *So Solomon built the house*] This verse resumes the narrative of verse 9.

15. *And he built*] The Hebrew uses the same word for the erection of the stone structure and for the work described in this verse, which was to fit the house with a wainscot of cedar.

both the floor of the house, and the walls of the cieling] More literally, and better, with R.V., '**from** the floor of the house **unto** the walls of the cieling.' The expression means from top to bottom, but 'the walls of the cieling' is a singular description of that portion of the wall which touches the cieling. The difference between the Hebrew word for 'walls' קירות and for 'beams' קורות is so slight that we can hardly help accepting the reading of the LXX. in the next verse, and apparently here too, of 'beams.'

and *he covered* them] It is better to omit the conjunction for which, as A.V. indicates, there is no Hebrew, and join with the previous clause, 'from the floor of the house to the walls (beams?) of the cieling he covered them &c.'

Thus the whole sides, roof and floors on the inside were of wood.

16. *And he built twenty cubits on the sides of the house*] This ren-

cubits on the sides of the house, both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar: he even built *them* for it within, *even*
17 for the oracle, *even* for the most holy *place*. And the house,
18 that *is*, the temple before it, was forty cubits *long*. And the cedar of the house within *was* carved with knops and open

dering does not make very clear what is intended. The word translated 'sides' is often used for the innermost part of anything, as of a cave (1 Sam. xxiv. 3), and of the recesses of a forest, as Lebanon (Is. xxxvii. 24). So here it signifies the innermost part of the Temple building as you looked from the porch, i.e. toward the farthest wall of the most holy place. The sense then becomes more manifest. He built at twenty cubits from this extreme end something with boards of cedar. Thus he made a separation of the most holy place, which was twenty cubits long, from the holy place. The R.V. gives this more clearly: 'He built twenty cubits **on the hinder part of the house**' with boards of cedar from the floor unto the walls ('beams' LXX.), i.e. these twenty cubits were thus shut off and made into a separate room (cf. 2 Chron. iii. 8). There was a doorway for access in this cedarwood partition (see verse 31), and before this probably were put the 'chains of gold' spoken of in verse 21. From 2 Chron. iii. 14 it seems that there was a vail in front of the whole of this woodwork, though no mention of it is made here.

It is very difficult to come to a clear idea about the room here provided. It seems certain that it was enclosed on three sides by the chambers built round about, so that there could have been no windows in it, nor any mode of escape for the smoke of the incense, except by openings under the eaves. It appears not to have been as high as the roof of the 'holy place'. We must remember that it was to be entered by one person only, and that but once a year.

he even built them *for it within*] i.e. He prepared this space of twenty cubits in the innermost part of the house, to be a separate room.

even *for the oracle*] The Hebrew says merely 'for an oracle.' This name for the most holy place is taken from the Vulgate 'oraculum.' The LXX. merely transliterates the Hebrew δαβίρ. The word is connected with the verb דבר (*davar*), usually rendered 'to speak,' and hence the notion of 'oracle' as the place where God revealed Himself. So Aquila and Symmachus rendered it sometimes by χρηματιστήριον, and Jerome gives λαλητήριον as an explanation. But the root, or its Arabic cognate, has a sense from which the meaning 'hinder portion' might come. Hence some consider the name merely as signifying the innermost part of the Temple building.

the most holy place] Described in the same words in the account of the Tabernacle (Exod. xxvi. 33, 34; Num. iv. 4, 19).

17. *And the house*] Here signifying the holy place, which was in front of the oracle. The word which in this verse is rendered 'before it' is an adjective, and this form is found only here. It qualifies the noun 'Temple,' and signifies 'that which is in front,' viz. of the oracle.

18. *And the cedar of the house within*] Better more literally, with

flowers: all *was* cedar; there was no stone seen. And the 19
oracle he prepared in the house within, to set there the ark
of the covenant of the LORD. And the oracle in the fore- 20
part *was* twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in
breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he
overlaid it with pure gold; and *so* covered the altar *which*
was of cedar. So Solomon overlaid the house within with 21

R.V. 'And **there was cedar upon** the house within.' He is now describing the wainscot of the holy place.

carved with knops] There is a feminine form of the word here rendered 'knops,' which in 2 Kings iv. 39 is used of 'wild gourds.' Hence 'gourds' is put on the margin of A.V. and R.V. The ornaments were in relief, and were perhaps somewhat of that shape. The Targum describes them as 'egg-shaped.' The *Vat.* LXX. (not *Alex.*) omits the verse altogether.

19. *And the oracle*, &c.] Read, 'And he prepared **an** oracle.'

to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord] Which was at present in the city of David. See iii. 15 note.

20. *the oracle in the fore-part*] The two words thus rendered would, if they stood alone, be rendered 'before the oracle.' In this verse, however, this cannot be the meaning. But in standing before such a room as is here described, it is in front of you, and you see the interior. In this way 'before the oracle' may be taken to indicate what is seen when you stand there. Hence we may arrive at the sense in the R.V. '**within the oracle was** *a space* &c.' It is difficult to assign any meaning to the A.V., and it may be that some error has crept into the text.

Some have preferred to render literally thus, 'And before the oracle—twenty cubits was it in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof, and he overlaid it with pure gold—he overlaid also the altar with cedar.' But the accents of the Hebrew do not favour such a parenthetic clause, and the last sentence is very awkward.

The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits at the beginning of the verse 'before the oracle,' then takes the next sentences as a specification of the size of the oracle, and makes an addition to the last clause thus, 'and he made an altar before the oracle and overlaid it with gold,' making no mention of the cedar at all. Most probably this represents the correct text.

and so *covered the altar* which was of *cedar*] We cannot, in the face of the preceding clause, translate otherwise than **and he covered an altar with cedar.** The construction in the two cases is identical. But then arises a difficulty. The altar in question was the altar of incense in the holy place. This stood in front of the vail which separated the most holy place (see Exod. xl. 5, 26), and in Ezek. xli. 22 it is called 'the altar of wood' (cf. Exod. xxx. 1—6). From the description in the verse before us there must have been some substance underneath the wood. The LXX. (*Alex.*) solves the difficulty by reading 'and he made' for 'and he covered,' i.e. ויעש for ויצף, καὶ ἐποίησε θυσιαστήριον κέδρου.

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pure gold: and he made a partition by the chains of gold
22 before the oracle; and he overlaid it with gold. And the whole house he overlaid with gold, until *he* had finished all the house: also the whole altar that *was* by the oracle he overlaid with gold.
23 And within the oracle he made two cherubims *of* olive

21. *with pure gold*] The adjective, or rather participle, as it is in Hebrew, signifies 'closed,' 'shut up.' The traditional rendering is that of the text, supported by the Chaldee, the Vulgate and Kimchi; but it is not clear how the sense comes, unless we may take it, as the notes of the Synod of Dort, that what was *precious* was usually *kept close*. The amount of gold employed is given in 2 Chron. iii. 8 as six hundred talents.

and he made a partition by the chains of gold] Render with R.V. **and he drew across** chains of gold. The words literally signify 'he caused to pass over with chains,' i.e. he made with chains of gold something that went across either the whole of the dividing wall or over the doorway which was made therein. From 2 Chron. iii. 5, 16 it seems as if chains had been used for ornamentation on other parts of the walls and pillars. The LXX. (*Alex.*) renders 'he drew a curtain across by means of chains of gold.'

and he overlaid it with gold] Now that a more literal sense has been given to the previous clause, and the word 'partition' got rid of, there is nothing for the 'it' in this sentence to refer to. As the clause stands, the word must refer to the oracle. Thus in the beginning of the verse 'the house within' will refer to the holy place, and this last clause to the most holy place. This is further emphasized by the words which immediately follow in 22. 'And the whole house he overlaid.'

22. *the whole altar that* was *by the oracle*] The preposition is not significant of position, but of possession. Read 'the whole altar that **belonged to** the oracle.' The priest who offered incense continually on this altar in the holy place could not enter the most holy place, but the altar on which the offering was made, though standing without, was looked upon as a part of the more sacred portion of the building, and placed close to the dividing wall.

23—30. Of the Cherubim within the oracle. (2 Chron. iii. 10—12.)

23. *And within the oracle he made two cherubims*] As the Hebrew word is already in the plural form, write **cherubim**. These cherubim were winged figures intended to represent some holy and heavenly form. They are first mentioned in Gen. iii. 24, where some have thought that 'the flame of a sword' spoken of in connexion with them implies that the cherubim were armed with this weapon. But this is not certainly to be deduced from the words. In 2 Chron. iii. 13 they are said to stand upon their feet, while the descriptions in Ezekiel (chapp. i. and x.) make them to have four faces. (Cf. also Exod. xxv. 18—22).

tree, each ten cubits high. And five cubits *was* the one 24
wing of the cherub, and five cubits the other wing of the
cherub: from the uttermost part of the one wing unto the
uttermost part of the other *were* ten cubits. And the other 25
cherub *was* ten cubits: both the cherubims *were* of one
measure and one size. The height of the one cherub *was* 26
ten cubits, and so *was it* of the other cherub. And he set 27
the cherubims within the inner house: and they stretched
forth the wings of the cherubims, so that the wing of the
one touched the *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub
touched the other wall; and their wings touched one another
in the midst of the house. And he overlaid the cherubims 28
with gold. And he carved all the walls of the house round 29
about *with* carved figures of cherubims and palm trees and
open flowers, within and without. And the floor of the 30
house he overlaid with gold, within and without.

And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive 31
tree: the lintel *and* side posts *were* a fifth *part of the wall.*

Their chief office in Scripture is to be a chariot for Jehovah (Ps. xviii. 11), and for this reason they were set up in the most holy place, where the divine presence was to manifest itself. Hence of God it is frequently said 'who dwelleth' *or* 'sitteth upon the cherubim.'

25. *one size*] Rather 'one **form.**' The size is implied in the previous word.

27. *And they stretched forth the wings of the cherubims*] Which is the frequent Hebrew form of expressing **the cherubim stretched forth their wings.** So R.V. On the way in which these cherubim were placed see below on viii. 6. It would seem as if in Solomon's Temple the cherubim did not face one another, as they are expressly said to have done in the Mosaic tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 20).

29. *within and without*] Both here and in the next verse these words can only refer to the inner and outer rooms, the most holy place and the holy place.

31—36. THE DOORS FOR THE ORACLE AND FOR THE TEMPLE. THE BUILDING OF THE INNER COURT. (Not in Chronicles.)

31. *the lintel* and *side posts*] There is no conjunction between these words, and the former seems from other places in O. T. to apply to the whole framework in which the doors were fixed, the latter is used regularly of the part to which the hinges were attached. The idea meant to be conveyed here is of the whole structure of the doorway, the framework with its posts.

were *a fifth* part of the wall] The expansion indicated by the italics of A. V. is no doubt correct both here and in verse 33. As the partition

32 The two doors also *were* of olive tree; and he carved upon
them carvings of cherubims and palm trees and open flowers,
and overlaid *them* with gold, and spread gold upon the che-
33 rubims, and upon the palm trees. So also made he for the
door of the temple posts of olive tree, a fourth *part of the*
34 *wall.* And the two doors *were* of fir tree: the two leaves of
the one door *were* folding, and the two leaves of the other
35 door *were* folding. And he carved *thereon* cherubims and
palm trees and open flowers: and covered *them* with gold

wall of the oracle was 20 cubits in height and the same in breadth the opening filled by the framework of the doorway would be 4 cubits high by 4 cubits broad.

32. *The two doors also* were] As there is nothing to make the noun here definite, it is better to understand the verb 'he made.' Render 'so *he made* two doors of olive-wood.'

and spread gold] Better, and made necessary by the text, 'and he spread the gold.' Here a different process is described. The walls and floors were covered with *flat* plates of gold nailed on (see 2 Chron. iii. 9), but to cover the carved work the gold must be beaten to fit. The verb employed here gives the idea of pressure exerted to force the metal into the needful shapes.

33. *for the door of the temple*] The word translated 'door' is the same which is rendered **entering** in verse 31. (So R. V.) The entering here meant is that from the porch into the holy place.

posts of olive tree] The word is that used for side-posts in 31. There is no mention here of the whole framework. But following the description given above we may assume that the dimensions of this doorway were also the same in height as in width.

a fourth part of the wall] The Hebrew has here a preposition before the numeral. Render '**out of** a fourth part of the wall.' The meaning is that the aperture was a fourth part of the wall in width, and the same measure in height. That would be five cubits each way, larger by one cubit than the doorway from the holy place into the most holy. Such a space was cut *out of* the wall for the doors.

34. *and the two doors* were *of fir tree*] As in 32 the expression is not definite. It is therefore simpler to put a light punctuation at the end of verse 33 and render 'and two doors of fir wood.'

the two leaves of the one door were *folding*] That is, could be doubled back upon one another. The doors were in 4 sections, of which two folded together against the wall on one side, and two on the other. Thus one quarter of the door could be opened, if no more space were needed, and the labour of pushing back the folded parts would be less than if they were all in one piece.

35. *and covered* them *with gold fitted upon the carved work*] Here we have a definite statement of what was done, and the same is no doubt meant in verse 32. The first verb is that which has been rendered **overlaid** all through the narrative. So consistency requires the same

fitted upon the carved work. And he built the inner court 36
with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams.

In the fourth year was the foundation of the house of the 37
LORD laid, in the month Zif: and in the eleventh year, in 38
the month Bul, which *is* the eighth month, was the house

rendering here. In 2 Chron. iii. 6 we read that precious stones, as well as gold, were used for adorning the walls.

upon the carved work] This is not a word connected with that so frequently used for 'carving' in these verses. So the R.V. has given graven work to mark the variation. There is no doubt that the figures on the doors were cut in the wood and in English 'graven-work' refers generally to metal. But see Isaiah xlv. 20; Deut. vii. 5, where *graven* images appear to have been of wood, and destructible by burning. The description here given appears to mean that the embossed and carved portions of the woodwork were covered with gold, but not the whole surface of the doors.

36. *And he built the inner court*] This inner court is that which in Jer. xxxvi. 10 is called 'the higher court' and must be that intended (2 Chron. iv. 9) by the 'court of the priests' in contradistinction to 'the great court,' which must have enclosed the inner one. There is some doubt as to how the description in this verse is to be understood. It seems clear from the passage in Jeremiah that the inner was on a higher level than the outer court. Some have thought that this elevation was made by three layers of stone and then a wooden planking put over all. But to do this for the whole enclosure would have been very laborious work and seemingly for no purpose. It seems better to take it that the elevation was artificially made, and then to understand the three rows of hewn stone, covered by one row of cedar wood at the top, to have made a sort of sunk fence all round the inner court. The people standing in the outer court would need to see what the priests were doing. This they would all be able to do if the wall of stone and cedar work were very little, if at all, higher than the level of the inner court.

37—38. COMPLETION OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. (Not in Chronicles.)

37. *In the fourth year*] i.e. Of king Solomon's reign. See verse 1. The LXX. (both *Vat.* and *Alex.*) omits these two verses, adding at the end of 36 *καὶ ᾠκοδόμησε τὸ καταπέτασμα τῆς αὐλῆς τοῦ αἰλὰμ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ ναοῦ.*

38. *in the month Bul*] This month is only mentioned here. The name is derived from the same root as *mabbul* = the deluge, and intimates that the character of the month was rainy. The later name of the month was Marchesvan. It was between the new moon of November and December, and this being the eighth month, while Zif was the second, it is seen that the exact time occupied by the building of the Temple was seven years and a half. Probably the preparation of wood and stone in Lebanon is not included in this time, but was made during the four years of Solomon's reign which preceded the building.

finished throughout all the parts thereof, and according to all the fashion of it. So was he seven years in building it.

7 But Solomon was building his own house thirteen years,
2 and he finished all his house. He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon; the length thereof *was* an hundred cubits, and the breadth thereof fifty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits, upon four rows of cedar pillars, with
3 cedar beams upon the pillars. And *it was* covered with cedar above upon the beams, that *lay* on forty five pillars,

CH. VII. 1—12. THE BUILDING OF SOLOMON'S OWN HOUSE, THE HOUSE OF THE FOREST OF LEBANON, AND THE HOUSE FOR PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *his own house*] This includes all the buildings described in *vv.* 1—12. The LXX. transfers all this section 1—12 to the end of the chapter. In Chronicles, though Solomon's own house is alluded to (2 Chron. vii. 11; viii. 1), there is no description of it.

thirteen years] The longer time occupied by this building, in comparison with the seven years and a half spent on the Temple, is accounted for by the greater extent of this latter work. The Temple was comparatively a small edifice, and for it years of preparation had preceded the actual work of the building.

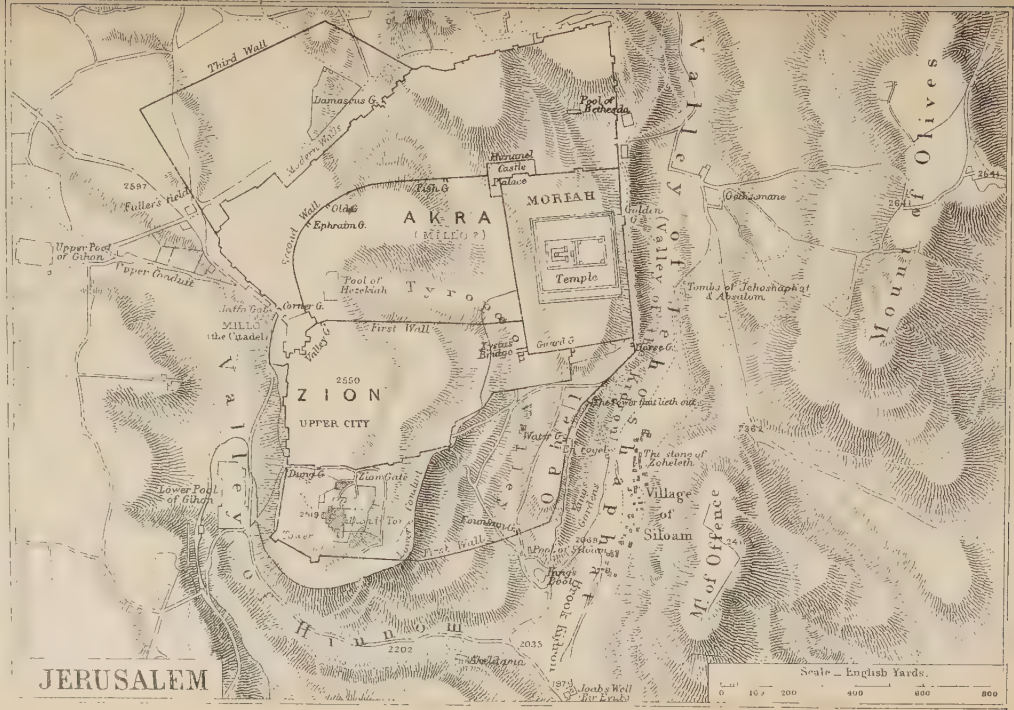
and he finished] i.e. At the end of twenty years and rather more. See ix. 10.

2. *He built also*] Better, **For** he built, as R.V. The verses that follow are not describing an addition to the work mentioned in verse 1, but only explaining the various parts thereof.

the house of the forest of Lebanon] This building which is mentioned again in x. 17 and 2 Chron. ix. 16 appears, from those passages, to have been Solomon's armoury. The multitude of pillars, which was the marked feature of the lower floor, made it admirably suited for the hanging of shields and targets. Its name was probably given because the wood of its pillars came from Lebanon, and when these were in position they looked like the trunks of forest trees.

upon four rows of cedar pillars] The number of the pillars is not given, but they must have been both very numerous and very substantial to support the three tiers of building which stood above them. It appears that the house had an external wall, and then rows of cedar pillars, four deep, stood round about, within the enclosure, to support the cedar beams which made the first floor of the chambers that ran along the sides. The cedar beams were no doubt let into the external wall as well as supported on the pillars.

3. *And* it was *covered with cedar above upon the beams*] The word here rendered 'beams' is the same which has been rendered 'side-chambers' in vi. 5. In two descriptions which are so closely related as that chapter and this, it is difficult to suppose that the word has a different sense in the two places. And we have here an account of a series


JERUSALEM
Third Wall
Damascus G.
Modern Walls
Pool of Bethesda
Hananel
Castle
Palace
MORIAH
Temple
Fish G.
Old G.
Ephraim G.
AKRA
(MILLO ?)
Second Wall
Fuller's field
2597
Upper Pool of Gihon
Upper Conduit
Pool of Hezekiah
Tyropœon
Corner G.
Jaffa Gate
MILLO
(the Citadel)
First Wall
Valley G.
Xystus Bridge
Guard G.
Horse G.
Golden G.
Gethsemane
Tombs of Jehoshaphat & Absalom
Mount of Olives
2641
Valley of Jehoshaphat
(Valley of the Kidron)
2550
ZION
UPPER CITY
Valley of Hinnom
Dung G.
Zion Gate
Lower Pool of Gihon
Tower
Lower Conduit
Fountain G.
First Wall
Ophel
Valley
Water G.
En rogel
The Tower that lieth out
The stone of Zoheleth
Village of Siloam
Mt. of Offence
Pool of Siloam
Kings Pool
Brook Kidron
2069
2202
2035
Akeldama
Joab's Well
Bir Eyub
Scale _ English Yards.
0
100
200
400
600
800

fifteen *in* a row. And *there were* windows *in* three rows, and 4
light *was* against light *in* three ranks. And all the doors 5
and posts *were* square, *with the* windows: and light *was*
against light *in* three ranks. And he made a porch of pil- 6
lars; the length thereof *was* fifty cubits, and the breadth
thereof thirty cubits: and the porch *was* before them: and

of side-chambers which ran all round the inside walls of this house of the forest of Lebanon, as the others did round the outside wall of the Temple. Taking the word as='side-chambers,' the text says that they were supported upon the pillars already mentioned in verse 2, and then adds that these chambers were forty-five in number, fifteen in a row. This seems to mean that the whole three tiers of rooms numbered forty-five, each of the three stories being divided into fifteen chambers. If we suppose that the chambers were only on three sides like those surrounding the Temple, then six on each side and three at each end would exactly make up the number, and would suit with the dimensions of the house, which was twice as long as it was broad. The whole verse then may be translated 'And it was covered with cedar above, over the forty and five side-chambers, which were upon the pillars, fifteen in a row.'

4. *And* there were *windows* in *three rows*] This is not the usual word for 'windows,' but is that which in vi. 4 describes the sloping woodwork, or lattice, used in the windows of the Temple. From its use in the two descriptions it may be supposed to indicate the like work here as there, and so 'windows' is no inappropriate rendering, as it can be understood from the former passage. The R.V. gives **prospects** to avoid the commoner word, and puts 'beams' in the margin. 'Window-spaces' would perhaps give the best idea of what appears to be meant, which is some wooden framework fitted into those walls which looked into the interior court.

and light was *against light* in *three ranks*] This means that the windows in every one of the three stories were exactly over each other. There is a very slight difference in the Hebrew of the final clause of the next verse, but the sense is exactly the same.

5. *And all the doors and posts* were *square*, with the *windows*] It is not easy to say how the last word of the Hebrew should be rendered. It is akin to that rendered 'windows' by the A.V. in verse 4. Hence a like meaning has been assigned to it here. But there is nothing in the original to represent 'with the.' The R.V. used **prospects** in the previous verse, and so gives here **were square in prospects**, adding in the margin 'were made square with beams.' Taking these 'beams' to signify, as before, the 'framework' of the doorways, the sense would be 'were set square in the framework,' i.e. of the doorways.

6. *And he made a* (R.V. **the**) *porch of pillars*] This would seem to have been a separate building not connected with the house of the forest. In the same manner the porch for the throne in the next verse was unconnected with any other building. What was the purpose of the porch of pillars is not stated.

and the porch was *before them*] It is better to make this clause

7 *the other* pillars and the thick beam *were* before them. Then he made a porch for the throne where he might judge, *even* the porch of judgement: and *it was* covered with cedar from
8 one side of the floor to the other. And his house where he dwelt *had* another court within the porch, *which* was of the like work. Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken *to wife*, like unto this porch.

dependent on the first verb. Thus 'he made the porch of pillars...and a porch before them,' i.e. before the pillars.

and the other *pillars and the thick beam* were *before them*] The word translated 'thick beam' seems most likely to have been a threshold or step work by which the porch was entered. The twice repeated 'before them' must refer to the same thing, viz. to the pillars of the first named porch, of which they formed the striking feature. So the sense of the verse would be 'he made the porch of pillars and in front of them also another porch with its pillars and a staircase or set of steps to approach it by.'

7. *Then he made a porch for the throne*] Better (with R. V.) 'And he made the porch of the throne.' As the pillars were the distinction of the former porch, so was the throne of this. On kings sitting in public to hear causes and give judgment, cf. 1 Kings xxii. 10; Ps. cxxii. 5.

and it was *covered with cedar from one side of the floor to the other*] Literally 'from floor to floor.' What is meant is that this was not an unenclosed porch like 'the porch of pillars' mentioned previously, but that it was enclosed with cedar wood walls all round from the floor to the ceiling. If this can be the sense of the word 'floor' in the second case, we must suppose the roof of the porch to be regarded as the floor of some upper room above it. But the word 'floor' קרקע is not very unlike קורות 'beams' and so some have suspected the scribe of having written the former instead of the latter in the second place. This would make all easy, but the other explanation is quite possible, and is accepted by Gesenius, though De Wette translates as in A.V.

8. *And his house where he dwelt* had *another court within the porch*, which *was of the like work*] It is better to leave out the italics of A.V. and translate 'And his house **where he might dwell, the other court within the porch,** was of the like work.' The description has apparently been carrying us, from the front of the house of the forest, regularly more and more inward. Now we are brought to a court behind the previously mentioned porch, and in this court stood the king's own dwelling house. It is noteworthy how little description is given to this or to the house for Pharaoh's daughter. This probably comes to pass because the public were never admitted to these quarters.

Pharaoh's daughter] Cf. iii. 1. The house for her probably joined the king's residence. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 5. 2) tells us that it was united with the porch of the throne, but his description is so vague that little reliance can be placed on it, and little help derived from it. The women's apartments, as usual in the East, were removed as far from public view as possible.

All these *were of* costly stones, according to the measures of 9
hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without, even
from the foundation unto the coping, and *so* on the outside
toward the great court. And the foundation *was of* costly 10
stones, *even* great stones, stones of ten cubits, and stones of
eight cubits. And above *were* costly stones, after the 11
measures of hewed stones, and cedars. And the great court 12
round about *was with* three rows *of* hewed stones, and a
row of cedar beams, both for the inner court of the house of
the LORD, and for the porch of the house.

9. *All these*] i.e. The whole of the buildings described in the previous verses.

according to the measures of hewed stones] Better not to be taken as in construction, but with R.V. **even hewn stones according to measure.** The word is literally 'according to measures,' and this the R. V. explains on the margin as 'after *divers* measures.' But this is what is meant by their text.

within and without] Though the inside face of the walls was to be covered with cedar, and so put out of sight, the same care was taken with the dressing of that part of the stone work, as with all that was to remain uncovered.

toward the great court] Better, **unto.** What appears to be meant in the verse is a strong expression of the excellency of the stone work. This is said to have been of the same character from the base to the coping of all the walls, and then is added, that it was the same from the front part of the buildings to the back. The front part, which was the house of the forest, is not mentioned, but it said that the good work extended unto the great court, which lay farthest back of all the buildings.

10. *And the foundation*] Even that work which was to be buried out of sight was of the same quality.

ten cubits...eight cubits] Probably we have here the greatest dimension, the length. We are left to imagine the breadth and thickness which would be proportional in stones of 15 feet and 12 feet long.

11. *And above*] i.e. The courses which lay upon the foundations.

after the measures of hewed stones] Render (as in 9) **hewn stone according to measure.**

and cedars] The noun is singular. It refers not to any beams that formed part of the wall, but to the cedar facings with which the interior stone work in many places was covered. R. V. **cedar-wood.**

12. *And the great court round about*] The words are the same as in vi. 36. The great court was the hindmost part of all the palace grounds, and was apparently higher than the level of the front part. The way in which it was enclosed was by a low wall (sunk fence) as was done for the inner-court of the Temple.

both for the inner court of the house of the Lord] The conjunction with which this sentence begins is the usual copulative. But the sense

13 And king Solomon sent and fet Hiram out of Tyre. He
14 *was* a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, and his father *was* a man of Tyre, a worker in brass: and he was filled *with* wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass. And he came to king Solomon, and wrought
15 all his work. For he cast two pillars *of* brass, of eighteen cubits

should be 'like as the inner court, &c.' (Cf. vi. 34.) Hence some have conjectured כ=*as*, instead of ו=*and* or *both*. The R.V. has given the true sense in the text 'like as the inner court of the house of the Lord, and the porch of the house,' and has put the literal translation on the margin. There is no great difficulty in gathering the former sense from the latter. We have only to take the construction to be 'and *thus was it done* for the inner court &c....and for.'

the porch of the house] Probably the porch intended is that spoken of in vi. 3. 'The house' without any defining words can only be taken of the Temple; so that we cannot understand any porch in Solomon's own house.

13—22. HIRAM A TYRIAN WORKER IN BRASS CASTS THE PILLARS JACHIN AND BOAZ. (2 Chron. ii. 14; iii. 15—17.)

13. *sent and fet*] 'Fet' is the old English past tense of the verb 'fetch,' and occurs several times in the version of 1611 (e.g. Gen. xviii. 7) but the more modern form has been introduced into our Bibles since 1750.

Hiram out of Tyre] The name of this workman is spelt Huram in 2 Chron. iv. 11. He was highly esteemed by the Tyrian king who in 2 Chron. ii. 13 calls him 'Huram my father,' and in a later verse (2 Chron. iv. 16) it is said 'the vessels thereof did Huram his father make for king Solomon.' So that he became as much treasured by the one king as by the other. For the expression cp. Gen. xlv. 8 where Joseph speaks of himself as *a father* to Pharaoh.

14. *He was a widow's son*] The Hebrew says **the son of a widow woman** and there is no reason why the literal expression should be relegated to the margin, as in A. V.

of the tribe of Naphtali] In 2 Chron. ii. 14 he is called 'the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan.' The two may be reconciled if we suppose the woman to have belonged to Dan, and her first husband to have been of the tribe of Naphtali.

a worker in brass] This had been the trade of the father, which his son followed and in which he gained such distinction. There seems to have been a fitness in the circumstance that Hiram, by birth half an Israelite, should be employed on the work of Solomon's temple.

and he was filled with *wisdom*] Compare the similar language used (Exod. xxxi. 3, xxxvi. 1) about Bezaleel and Aholiab. Only in that place there is added to the qualifications 'the spirit of God.'

15. *of eighteen cubits high apiece*] The Hebrew says 'eighteen cubits

high apiece: and a line of twelve cubits did compass either of them about. And he made two chapiters *of* molten brass, 16
to set upon the tops of the pillars: the height of the one chapiter *was* five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter *was* five cubits: *and* nets of checker work, *and* wreaths of 17
chain work, for the chapiters which *were* upon the top of

was the height of one pillar.' There can be very little doubt that this should be followed by 'and eighteen cubits was the height of the other pillar.' But the similarity of the words has caused the scribe to overlook them. And there is a like defect in the other half of this verse. For instead of 'did compass either of them about' the original gives 'did compass the second pillar.' The whole of the latter passage was no doubt 'a line of twelve cubits did compass about the one pillar, and a line of twelve cubits the second pillar.' The A. V. gives the sense, and in a better fashion than by introducing italics to represent the missing words. The full form in similar phrases occurs immediately in verses 16 and 17, and then in 18 there is an omission of one-half the description, just as has happened here.

The first portion of these pillars was 18 cubits = 27 feet high by 12 cubits = 18 feet in circumference. This of itself would make a pillar of disproportionate dimensions, but on the top there were placed chapiters (capitals) of 5 cubits = $7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high. Thus the whole height would be 23 cubits or $34\frac{1}{2}$ feet. It is said (2 Chron. iii. 15) that the pillars were 35 cubits high. In that case we should have to suppose them raised on bases of 12 cubits, which is out of all proportion. The metal work may have had some stone base to rest on, but that would never have been 18 feet high. It is more reasonable to suppose that the numbers, marked in Hebrew letters, have been misread by the Chronicler. See however the note on vi. 3 above, with reference to these dimensions.

These pillars were broken up and carried away along with other metal at the time of the Babylonian invasion, see 2 Kings xxv. 13; Jer. lii. 17, in which latter passage the heights of the pillar and its capital are exactly as here, and in the former there is only a variation in the dimension of the capital, not of the pillar.

17. and *nets of checker work*] The two nouns are from the same root, and indicate some kind of interlaced metalwork with which the bellying parts of the capitals were overlaid. This, with the chains next mentioned, and the two rows of pomegranates (ver. 18) formed the ornamentation of the lower portion of the capitals for one cubit of their breadth.

As the conjunction 'And' has nothing to represent it in the Hebrew it is better to render, '**There were** nets &c.' The LXX. in this verse begins 'And he made two nets &c....even a net for the one chapiter and a net for the other chapiter.' Thus the 'seven' of the A.V. disappears and 'net' is substituted. There is a good deal of similarity between שִׁבְעָה = seven, and שְׂבֹכָה = a net, so that there may have been a confusion, and certainly below in verse 41 mention is made of *two* networks, not *seven*.

the pillars; seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the
18 other chapiter. And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that *were* upon the top, *with* pomegranates: and so did he
19 for the other chapiter. (And the chapiters that *were* upon the top of the pillars *were* of lily work in the porch, four
20 cubits). And the chapiters upon the two pillars *had pomegranates* also above, over against the belly which *was* by

18. *upon the top*, with *pomegranates*] The Hebrew text means 'upon the top of the pomegranates.' But some authorities give 'upon the top **of the pillars**,' which has been adopted by the R.V. The first words of the verse must however surely be wrong. 'And he made the pillars' is utterly out of place here. It had been noticed before; and the present verse is a description of the capitals. What appears to have happened is this. The words for 'pillars' and 'pomegranates' have changed places. The LXX. gives no help. But assuming this interchange of words we may render (nearly with R.V.) '**So** he made the pomegranates, and **there were** two rows about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top of the pillars; and so made he for the other chapiter.' The words 'to cover...pillars' explaining the purpose of the work, come in a little awkwardly, but a sense is made out of what before was incomprehensible.

19. *and the chapiters that* were *upon the top of the pillars*] This verse refers to the four cubits of lily work, which was higher than the bellying portion of the capital, and formed the topmost part of the ornament.

were *of lily work in the porch*] The R.V. transposes **in the porch were of lily work**, thus marking clearly that the pillars were within the porch. The language of 2 Chron. iii. 17 has induced some to think that they were outside, in the court. The words there are 'he reared up the pillars before the temple,' but the word rendered 'temple' is that which is constantly used (see below, verse 21) for the holy place, and the porch was in front of that. So that though standing within the porch the pillars would still be 'before the temple.'

20. *And the chapiters upon the two pillars* had pomegranates *also above*] The italics are without justification. The R.V. gives the sense; 'And **there were** chapiters also above upon the two pillars.' What is now being described is that portion of the capital which was below the lily work. But the writer uses 'chapiter' for the part, as well as for the whole capital.

over against the belly which was *by the network*] R.V. **close by** the belly which was **beside** the network.' The prepositions make the difficulty here. The first has something of the idea of 'all along' and describes the way in which the pomegranates went close up to the bellying portion of the capital. Probably the two rows ran round the pillar, one just above, the other just below the enlarged part. Then the network appears to have been over the belly. The preposition intimates that if you could have looked from the woodwork, the metal nets and

the network: and the pomegranates *were* two hundred *in* rows round about upon the other chapiter. And he set up 21
the pillars in the porch of the temple: and he set up the right pillar, and called the name thereof Jachin: and he set up the left pillar, and called the name thereof Boaz. And 22
upon the top of the pillars *was* lily work: so was the work of the pillars finished.

chains were just in front of you. So that in the 'beside' of the R.V. we must understand the notion of overlying.

two hundred, in *rows*] As we have taken verse 18 the rows were two for each capital, so that 100 pomegranates were in each row. Apparently in 2 Chron. iii. 16 the number specified is only for one single row. In the parallel passage of Jeremiah (lii. 23) this appears more clearly. For the pomegranates are said to have been arranged one at each of the four cardinal points and the other 96 used to complete the circuit. This can only be a description of a single row.

round about upon the other chapiter] Here there is the same sort of omission, be it intentional or not, as in verse 15. What is meant, we should express by 'round about (upon the one chapiter as) upon the other chapiter.'

21. *And he set up the pillars in the porch*] The preposition is not the same as in verse 19. Render here 'at the porch.'

Jachin...Boaz] These words are evidently given as proper names, and the LXX. transliterates them here, but translates them in the parallel passage of 2 Chronicles (iii. 17) by κατόρθωσις and ἰσχύς. Both words are significant. The first is a verb (see Job xxvii. 17) signifying 'he will prepare, or, establish,' the second = 'in him is strength.' If they be interpreted they are both to be referred to God. Some have wished by a slight alteration of the Hebrew points in the latter word to combine the two into one sentence meaning 'he will establish by strength.' But it is not likely that a sentence would be thus split up to make two names.

22. *upon the top of the pillars*] The lily work is mentioned again because it was the topmost part of the ornament, and the pillars have been described from the bottom upwards. Hence it was fit to speak of it here, where it is said the work of the pillars was finished.

We have already seen that it is not probable that these pillars stood out in the open space of the court, but on either side within the porch which was before the holy place. Their dimensions give the impression that they were only for ornament, and did not bear up any part of the structure. The height of the porch is not mentioned in 1 Kings vi. 3. Therefore we might presume that it was the height of the rest of the building of the holy place, viz. 30 cubits. Even for such a porch these pillars of 23 cubits could hardly have been intended as supports. But in 2 Chronicles (iii. 4) the porch is said to have been 120 cubits high, and so in Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 3, 2), for which height pillars like those here described are quite out of proportion. Moreover, none of Hiram's work

23 And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: *it was* round all about, and his height *was* five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round
24 about. And under the brim of it round about *there were* knops compassing it, ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about: the knops *were* cast *in* two rows, when it was
25 cast. It stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east: and the sea *was set* above upon them, and all their hinder parts
26 *were* inward. And it *was* a handbreadth thick, and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, *with* flowers of lilies: it contained two thousand baths.

seems to have been intended for the temple-building, but only for its decoration and furniture. It seems best therefore to consider these pillars as significant ornaments of the Temple porch. See also on this matter the note on vi. 3 above.

23—26. THE MOLTEN SEA WHICH HIRAM MADE.
(2 Chron. iv. 2—5.)

23. *And he made a* (R.V. **the**) *molten sea*] The definite article is expressed in the original, and the vessel itself was unique. It is called a 'sea' because of its great capacity (see Josephus *Ant.* VIII. 3, 5). The Hebrew word is not confined in use to the ocean, but is applied to the Nile (Is. xviii. 2), and to the Euphrates (Is. xxvii. 1). So *lacus* is used by Vergil (*Georg.* IV. 173) for a blacksmith's trough. See also xviii. 32, note.

ten cubits from one brim to the other, &c.] The R.V. tries to be more literal, but with the same sense. **Ten cubits from brim to brim, round in compass.**

a line of thirty cubits] This would in round numbers be the size of the circumference, with ten cubits as diameter.

24. *knops*] The word is that which occurs in vi. 18, and the knops were probably of a gourd-shape. See note there. The description in 2 Chronicles (iv. 3) says that *oxen* and not *knops* were the ornaments.

ten in a cubit] This would make the number of knops to be 300. But the R.V. renders **for ten cubits.** And so the words are rendered in vi. 26. But the A.V. must give the true sense. Otherwise why is it said that the sea was *encompassed* by these knops?

when it was cast] i.e. They were of the same piece with the whole rim, and not attached afterwards like some of the ornaments of the pillars.

25. *the sea* was set *above upon them*] i.e. The bottom rested on the backs of the oxen. Thus the height from the ground to the rim would be five cubits, and the height of the oxen besides. Nothing is said of such a thing, but it is not unlikely that the water was drawn out through the mouths of the oxen.

26. *an handbreadth thick*] i.e. The metal of which it was made.

And he made ten bases of brass; four cubits *was* the 27
length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof, and
three cubits the height of it. And the work of the bases 28
was on this *manner:* they had borders, and the borders
were between the ledges: and on the borders that *were* 29

with *flowers of lilies*] Rather (as R.V.) **'like the flower of a lily.'** This is to indicate that the brim bent outward and not that lily-flowers were all round it.

it contained two thousand baths] In 2 Chron. iv. 5 it is said 'three thousand baths.' Perhaps the smaller quantity was about what was usually kept in supply, the larger what it could contain if it were quite full.

The 'bath' was the largest Hebrew liquid measure, but it is not easy to discover what its size was. According to Josephus it held rather more than 8 gallons. Other data make it about half that size. A vessel that could contain 16,000 gallons must have been very enormous to be made in one casting. And the dimensions given, viz. a diameter of 10 cubits by a depth of 5 cubits if the cubit = 18 inches would not hold so much, unless the sides were bowed outward very considerably so as to make the diameter much greater in the inside than at the top. But the description of Josephus makes it to be hemispherical, so that the diameter would be largest at the top. A vessel of this shape however could not be made to rest on the backs of twelve oxen without a good deal of contrivance, while with a cylindrical vessel there is no difficulty. Now a cylinder of the dimensions given in verse 23, taking the cubit = 18 inches, would contain nearly 8260 gallons. It seems therefore that the Hebrew 'bath' should be taken as a measure of rather more than 4 gallons. The figures which Josephus gives are so frequently exaggerated, very often doubled, that it need not trouble us if they appear so in this case. The difference between Chronicles and Kings above mentioned may be due to the misreading of a letter in the Hebrew form of notation.

27—39. Of the ten bases, and the lavers upon them. (2 Chron. iv. 6.)

27. *ten bases of brass*] These were stands for the ten lavers mentioned below. See verse 38.

28. *they had borders*] From the description in the next verse, the word, which in its literal sense would apply to any surrounding or enclosure, must mean the side of the base, on which the figures mentioned in 29 were carved or cast. So that the **panels** of the R.V. (marg.) would be the most correct rendering. And so in verses 31, 32, 35 and 36.

between the ledges] These seem to have been the perpendicular shafts, at the four corners of each base, which would be raised so as to form two sides of the framework enclosing the panels. A more strictly literal rendering of the final words would be 'even borders between the ledges.'

between the ledges *were* lions, oxen, and cherubims: and upon the ledges *there was* a base above: and beneath the lions and oxen *were certain* additions made of thin work.
30 And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass: and the four corners thereof had undersetters: under the laver *were* undersetters molten, at the side of every addition.
31 And the mouth of it within the chapiter and above *was* a cubit: but the mouth thereof *was* round *after* the work of

29. *and upon the ledges* there was *a base above*] The word here rendered 'base' differs from that in the two previous verses and so the R.V. has rendered **a pedestal.** It seems to denote some projection upward from the four shafts at the corners to act as a support for the lavers when they were put in position.

certain *additions made of thin work*] These words signify rather 'festoons, work that hung down.' So R.V. **wreaths of hanging work.**

30. *and plates of brass*] For 'plates' read **axles.**

and the four corners thereof had undersetters] The last word is that usually rendered 'shoulders,' (see R.V. margin), and the word translated 'corners' means rather (1) a footstep, (2) a foot. It is used Exod. xxv. 12 for the corners (R.V. feet) of the ark, into which rings were to be fixed for the staves to pass through when it was carried about. This seems the more suitable rendering here also and it is a different word that is rendered 'corners' in verse 34. The sense would then be 'the four feet thereof had shoulder pieces' i.e. attached to them. The purpose of these shoulders appears to have been for the axles to pass through on which the wheels were fixed. The next clause would then run 'underneath the laver were the shoulders molten.' But because of that expression some have thought that the 'shoulder pieces' rose upward from the top of the four feet, and were meant as stays on which the laver should rest.

at the side of every addition] The last word is the same which in the previous verse has been rendered 'wreaths.' And here that sense must also be given to it. Literally, 'at the side of each one (were) wreaths' or more idiomatically, (as R.V.) **with wreaths at the side of each.**

31. *And the mouth of it*] Here the pronoun must, I think, be referred, as in 'corners (feet) thereof' of verse 30, to the base. The bases appear to have had a circular orifice in the top, which is here called the mouth. This opening was, as it seems, surmounted and surrounded by a capital, which itself had an opening to receive the lowest part of the laver. The height of the capital above the level surface of the top of the base appears not to be specified unless the half cubit of verse 35 be taken to refer to the capital. One cubit was the diameter of the orifice in the top of the base.

but the mouth thereof] Better, **'And'** &c. The pronoun here by a difference of gender in the original is shewn to refer to a different noun. This can only be the 'chapiter.' That superstructure widened out to-

the base, a cubit and a half: and also upon the mouth of it *were* gravings with their borders, foursquare, not round. And under the borders *were* four wheels; and the axletrees 32 of the wheels *were* joined to the base: and the height of a wheel *was* a cubit and half a cubit. And the work of the 33 wheels *was* like the work of a chariot wheel: their axletrees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, *were* all molten. And *there were* four undersetters to the four 34

wards the top, and the round opening in top of it, to receive the bottom of the laver, is what is meant by the second 'mouth.'

after *the work of the base*] Better, as the word is the same which was so rendered in verse 29, **after the work of a pedestal.** It was in this way that the chapiter served as a support to the laver. This chapiter had graved work all round about its upper edge, which may be fitly called 'mouth' as it was meant to receive the laver.

with their borders, foursquare, not round] Better, **And their** borders **were** foursquare, not round. It is better to render as literally as possible for it is very doubtful whether these words have reference at all to the chapiter. They seem to be a recurrence to the description of those borders (or panels) spoken of in verses 28 and 29. In that case the pronoun 'their' in this clause would refer to the bases. This is the more probable because the 'borders' of the next verse are certainly those panels on the sides of the bases.

32. *And under the borders* [**panels**] *were four wheels*] Better, '**the** four wheels.' They were so fixed that they might not hide by their upper part any portion of the ornamental panels.

and the axletrees of the wheels were joined *to the base*] More literally, **were in the base.** That is they formed a portion of the casting. The Hebrew word here is different from that rendered 'axles' in verse 30. This word is literally 'hands' and no doubt signifies some kind of 'holder' or support by which the wheels were kept in place. If the 'shoulders' of verse 30 also belong to the wheels they must have been made doubly secure.

33. *their axletrees*] Literally, 'hands' as in the previous verse.

their naves] By etymology the original word must refer to some curved part of the wheel. It seems better therefore to render, with R.V., **felloes** here, and transfer the word 'naves' to translate the last of the four nouns, which by its derivation signifies 'that to which all the parts converge.' The third of the Hebrew words is akin to that which in Exod. xxvii. 10, 11 is used for the 'pillars' or 'poles' which supported the hangings of the tabernacle. Hence here most likely 'the spokes' of the wheels.

34. *And* there were *four undersetters to*, &c.] Literally, 'shoulders at &c.' The mention of these 'shoulder-pieces' again immediately after the wheel seems, if we may rely on the correct order of the text, to shew that they belonged to the wheel-work.

corners of one base: *and* the undersetters *were* of the *very*
35 base itself. And in the top of the base *was there* a round
compass of half a cubit high: and on the top of the base
the ledges thereof and the borders thereof *were* of the same.
36 For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders
thereof, he graved cherubims, lions, and palm trees, accord-
ing to the proportion of every one, and additions round
37 about. After this *manner* he made the ten bases: all of
38 them had one casting, one measure, *and* one size. Then
made he ten lavers of brass: one laver contained forty
baths: *and* every laver was four cubits: *and* upon every
39 one of the ten bases one laver. And he put five bases on
the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the
house: and he set the sea on the right side of the house
eastward over against the south.

of one base] That is, of each one.

of the very *base itself*] The 'very' is surplusage. Literally, it is 'from (i.e. of) the base were its shoulders,' i.e. they were of one piece with it.

35. *the ledges thereof*] Literally, 'the hands thereof.' Probably some kind of prop or holder is intended. R. V. gives **stays**, both here and in the next verse.

36. *according to the proportion of every one, and additions round about*] The word rendered 'proportion' means rather any 'bare space.' Hence the sense is that the graving was such as the space admitted. So, and to harmonize the final words with the previous verse, we should render 'according to **the space** in every one, and **with wreaths** round about.'

37. *one size*] Better, 'one **form**.' See on vi. 25.

38. *Then made he*] It is only the simple copulative **And**.

39. *And he put*] The verb is the same which later on in the verse is translated **set**. It is better to adhere to the same rendering in the same verse. It would also be more in accordance with the Hebrew to translate 'And he set the bases, five on the right side (*Heb.* shoulder) of the house &c.'

eastward over against (*better*, towards) *the south*] The building looked north and south, so the sides would be east and west. The sea then stood at the south corner of the east side.

There is much uncertainty about the meaning of parts of the language in this description of the bases. They appear however to have been large box-shaped structures, set on four wheels. The wheels did not come up higher than the bottom of the box, and so needed shoulders and stays in which the axles might run and by which they might be kept in position. Above the box, which had a large hole in the top, rose a sort of capital on which was fixed the laver. The sides of the box and the capital as well as the stays were covered with figures. The

And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the 40
basons. So Hiram made an end of doing all the work that
he made king Solomon *for* the house of the LORD: the two 41
pillars, and the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* on the
top of the *two* pillars; and the two networks, to cover the
two bowls of the chapiters which *were* upon the top of the
pillars; and four hundred pomegranates for the two net- 42
works, *even* two rows *of* pomegranates for one network, to
cover the two bowls of the chapiters that *were* upon the
pillars; and the ten bases, and ten lavers on the bases; and 43
one sea, and twelve oxen under the sea; and the pots, and 44 45
the shovels, and the basons: and all these vessels, which

purpose of these lavers as we are told 2 Chron. iv. 6, was for washing such things as were offered for the burnt offering. This was most likely the reason why they were needed of some considerable height and so were supported on the box-shaped bases. The laver would be of necessity as high as the altar of burnt offering, to the side of which it must have been brought at the time of any offering. That the altar stood higher than the level of the court seems evident from viii. 22, where Solomon is described as standing before it in the sight of all the people.

40—51. SUMMARY OF HIRAM'S WORK. COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE. (2 Chron. iv. 11—22; v. 1.)

40. *And Hiram made the lavers*] Many ancient authorities (see R.V. marg.) read **pots** instead of 'lavers,' and this is given in 2 Chron. iv. 11. The difference is so slight between כיורות = lavers, and סירות = pots, that we need not be surprised at the variation in different MSS.

that he made king Solomon] R.V. reads, with the same sense, 'that **he wrought for** king Solomon.' Perhaps it reads a little more easily. In some MSS. and Versions the reading is 'that king Solomon made,' just as in verse 51 below, where the same phrase is used of the whole work.

41. *and the* two *bowls of the chapiters that were on the top of the two pillars*] The numeral in the original belongs to 'bowls' and therefore should not be in italics in the first place, but should be omitted in the second.

42. *and four hundred pomegranates*] The original is definite. Read, 'and **the** four hundred.' The italic 'even' can be omitted without detriment to the sense.

43. *and ten lavers*] The Hebrew has, 'and **the** ten lavers,' and this definiteness is natural in such an enumeration. So in the next verse we should have '**the** one sea and **the** twelve oxen.'

45. *and all these vessels*] Better, at the close of the list, 'even all these.' The Heb. text has consonants which would be rendered 'the vessels of the Tent' i.e. the tabernacle. But this is corrected by a

Hiram made to king Solomon *for* the house of the LORD,
46 *were of* bright brass. In the plain of Jordan did the king
cast them, in the clay ground between Succoth and Zarthan.
47 And Solomon left all the vessels *unweighed*, because they
were exceeding many: neither was the weight of the brass
48 found out. And Solomon made all the vessels that *pertained unto* the house of the LORD: the altar of gold, and

marginal reading to 'these vessels,' which is most certainly the true text. The variation comes about by the transposition of two consonants אהל for אלה.

made to king Solomon] In modern English we should say 'for,' in spite of the following 'for' coming so close. But the R.V. has changed the phrase 'for the house of the Lord' both here and in verse 40 into **in the house of the Lord.** There is no preposition at all in the Hebrew, but the noun appears to be the accusative of place. So that the change of the R.V. is not without justification. The same construction is translated 'in the house of the Lord' 2 Kings xi. 3, 15, and elsewhere.

bright brass] The R.V. gives **furnished brass.** The original word is a participle and not an adjective.

46. *in the clay ground*] As the margin of A.V. explains, the literal rendering is 'in the thickness of the ground.' The Hebrews had a paucity of adjectives and were obliged to express in such wise what we mean by 'stiff ground' and which is excellently rendered by the English version.

between Succoth and Zarthan] The last word should be written *Zarethan*. See Josh. iii. 16. That both Succoth and Zarethan were in the circle, or district, of Jordan we can see both from that passage and this, but their precise position is unknown. Succoth was allotted to the tribe of Gad (Josh. xiii. 27) which seems to prove that it was on the east side of the Jordan, so Zarethan from their connexion in this verse was probably on that side too. In 2 Chron. iv. 17 Zaredathah is the name given instead of Zarethan, and that name has been thought by some to be a modified form of Zeredah (1 Kings xi. 26) the birthplace of Jeroboam son of Nebat. According to the Septuagint additions to the story of Jeroboam (1 Kings xii. 24, 25) Zeredah was a strong place in Mt. Ephraim, but of this we cannot be sure. It would however in that case be on the west of Jordan, and it seems a singular manner of speech to describe the foundries of Hiram as between a place on the east of the Jordan and another on the west.

47. *neither was the weight of the brass found out*] The R.V. gives **'could not** be found out.' The verb, which signifies literally 'to investigate,' 'to search out,' seems employed to indicate that no attempt was made to discover it.

48. *that* pertained unto *the house of the Lord*] The construction is like that in verse 45. Hence R.V. has 'that **were in** the house of the Lord.'

the table *of* gold, whereupon the shewbread *was*, and the 49
candlesticks *of* pure gold, five on the right side, and five on
the left, before the oracle, with the flowers, and the lamps,
and the tongs *of* gold, and the bowls, and the snuffers, and 50
the basons, and the spoons, and the censers *of* pure gold;
and the hinges *of* gold, *both* for the doors of the inner house,
the most holy *place, and* for the doors of the house, *to wit*,
of the temple. So was ended all the work that king Solomon 51
made *for* the house of the LORD. And Solomon brought in
the *things* which David his father had dedicated; *even* the
silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the
treasures of the house of the LORD.

the altar of gold] R.V. **the golden altar**, i.e. the altar of incense made of cedar wood and overlaid with gold.

49. *pure gold*] See on vi. 21.

50. *and the bowls*] This is the word which is usually rendered 'basons.' See 2 Sam. xvii. 28, &c. A different word is translated 'bowl' elsewhere, see Judg. vi. 38. As 'basons' occurs later on in the verse, the R.V. has changed 'bowls' here to '**cups**,' a rendering given for this word sometimes on the margin of A.V.

and the censers] This Hebrew word is frequently rendered 'censer,' but as in Exod. xxvii. 3, xxxviii. 3 and other places, where it relates to the altar furniture and fittings, the plural is rendered '**fire pans**,' the R.V. has introduced that rendering here. Cf. also 2 Kings xxv. 15 and Jer. lii. 19. In the latter part of this verse the R.V. preserves the order of the Hebrew, and gives a little more explicitness, by removing 'of gold' after 'hinges' to the end of the verse. With the description here given should be compared the account of the vessels of the Mosaic tabernacle. Exod. xxv.—xxx.

51. *So was ended*, &c.] The changes of order and words in this verse made by R.V. (*viz.* **Thus all the work that king Solomon wrought in the house of the Lord was finished.**) are such as to bring as nearly as possible this passage and 2 Chron. v. 1 into accord. Where the Hebrew words are the same there seems a gain in representing them in such a recital as the present by the same translation. On 'in the house of the Lord,' cf. above on verse 45.

among the treasures] R.V. '**in the treasuries.**' The word is used rather of the place than of the things kept in it. Thus Joel i. 17, it is rendered 'garners,' and in 1 Chron. xxvii. 25 'storehouses,' and two verses later in the same chapter 'cellars' for wine. It is noteworthy that in Kings nothing is said of the treasures amassed by David, while in Chronicles (1 Chron. xxix. 1—8) they are dwelt on at some length.

8 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel, and all the
heads of the tribes, the chief of the fathers of the children
of Israel, unto king Solomon *in* Jerusalem, that *they* might
bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the
2 city of David, which *is* Zion. And all the men of Israel
assembled themselves unto king Solomon at the feast in the
3 month Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month. And all the

CH. VIII. 1—11. DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE. BRINGING UP OF THE ARK AND THE HOLY VESSELS. THE GLORY OF THE LORD FILLS THE HOUSE. (2 Chron. v. 2—14.)

1. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel*] The LXX. (*Vat.*) prefaces this chapter with the words 'And it came to pass when Solomon had finished building the house of the Lord and his own house after twenty years,' then &c. These words are from the commencement of chap. ix. where they also recur in the LXX., and the precise time 'twenty years' is found mentioned 1 Kings ix. 10; 2 Chron. viii. 1. But that the Temple remained undedicated through all the years that Solomon's house was building is nowhere told us, and is very improbable.

Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 4. 1) says the king summoned the assembly by a formal document (γράψας).

the chief of the fathers] Better with margin of A.V. and text of R.V. **the princes of the fathers'** houses. The persons meant are those who are called Ex. vi. 14 'heads of their fathers'' houses. In that passage the word for 'houses' is expressed, as it is in many other places (cf. especially Numb. i. 16, 18, 20, &c., ii. 2). But the abbreviated form, as here, came into common use (see Num. xxxvi. 1; Josh. xix. 51, xxi. 1, &c.). The rendering of the full phrase should in these cases be supplied, 'houses' being printed in italics.

that they *might bring up the ark*] Whatever may have been the relative heights of the Temple mount and of Zion, in a religious sense the former would be esteemed the more exalted, and so 'to bring up' and 'to go up' thither would be the natural modes of expression. Cf. Is. xxxviii. 22. Besides they would have to descend first from Zion and then to ascend Moriah. On the religious importance and exaltation of Zion cf. Ps. xlviii. 15 *seqq.*

the city of David which is *Zion*] See above on iii. 1.

2. *at the feast in the month Ethanim which* is *the seventh month*] Josephus tells us that the feast of tabernacles fell at this time, and that that festival and the dedication services were combined into one great feast. We know from Lev. xxiii. 34, that the feast of tabernacles commenced on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and was held for seven days. The month Ethanim, which name only occurs here, is described as the seventh month. The name, which is connected with a word used for running water, is thought to signify 'the rainy month.' Josephus calls it Θισρί, which was the month between the new moons

elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. And 4
they brought up the ark of the LORD, and the tabernacle of
the congregation, and all the holy vessels that *were* in the
tabernacle, even those did the priests and the Levites bring

of October and November. If heavy rains were common at the time it was an unfortunate date for the feast of tabernacles. The 'early rains' spoken of in Scripture were the rains of autumn, and fell at the end of October or beginning of November, but came on very gradually. The 'latter rains' were those of spring, mostly in March. If the feast took place towards the middle of October it would close before the rains began to fall.

Supposing the Temple to have been dedicated as soon as possible after its completion, this festival must have been held in the twelfth year of Solomon's reign. For in vi. 37 we are told that the actual building was finished in the eighth month of the eleventh year. The seventh month, named for the dedication, must have been in the year following.

3. *all the elders*] The other representative persons mentioned in verse 1 are all no doubt to be included in this phrase.

the priests took up the ark] This duty was usually performed by the Levites (cf. Numb. ii. 31), but on very solemn occasions the priests undertook it (see Josh. iii. 6, vi. 6). At this time it was necessary that they should do so, for the ark was to be brought into the most holy place, whither the Levites (Numb. iv. 20) were forbidden to enter. Moreover, the final conveyance of the ark to its special seat was a duty to call for the most sacred of God's ministers. It is worth while to compare with this passage the statement in 2 Chron. v. 4. There it is said 'and the *Levites* took up the ark,' and the narrative then continues, stating that the Levites 'brought up' the ark, i.e. carried it during the transfer, but before its introduction into the Temple, the phrase changes and we read 'the *priests* brought in the ark of the covenant into his place.'

4. *and the tabernacle of the congregation*] Better, as in other places, **the Tent of meeting.** This consecrated tent, which had up to this time stood in Gibeon, was now taken down, and the curtains and poles of which it consisted seem to have been brought to the Temple to be preserved. There was probably room enough for their bestowal in the 'side chambers' which enclosed the Temple on three sides. Others have suggested a chamber above the most holy place. We have nothing to guide us to a conclusion either in history or tradition. A tradition which points to the preservation of the Tent is found 2 Macc. ii. 4.

those did the priests and the Levites bring up] In the parallel passage in 1 Chron. v. 5, the conjunction 'and' is omitted and special attention is called to Deut. xvii. 18, where, and in subsequent places of the same book 'the priests the Levites' are spoken of. It is noteworthy that Josephus speaks only of the Levites, until the ark is to be brought within the most holy place. Then, he says, all the rest withdrew and the priests carried it to its resting-place. He also describes the procession, and how

5 up. And king Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled unto him, *were* with him before the ark, sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor
6 numbered for multitude. And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy *place,* even under the
7 wings of the cherubims. For the cherubims spread forth *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubims
8 covered the ark and the staves thereof above. And they drew out the staves, that the ends of the staves were seen

the road was drenched with libations and with the blood of many sacrifices, while the abundant burning of incense filled all the air with fragrance so that people at a great distance could note that God was, as men would judge, changing His abode and coming to dwell in the house which had been newly built and dedicated to Him. The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits nearly the whole of verses 2 and 3, and also a portion of ver. 4.

5. were *with him before the ark*] This must refer to the time when the great procession had reached the Temple court. At that spot the ark was set down, and king and people joined in a solemn sacrifice, before the priests bore the ark into the most holy place.

6. *even under the wings of the cherubims*] The outspread wings of the cherubim extended across the whole width of the oracle (vi. 27) and their wings touched one another in the middle of the house. Beneath these wings that touched, the ark was set down. As it was only a cubit and a half high (Exod. xxv. 10), and the figures of the cherubim were 10 cubits high (vi. 23) it is probable that some base or stand was provided, so that the ark might be raised a little from the ground, though this is not stated. Josephus tells us that the joined wings overshadowed the ark, covering it as though it were under a tent or a dome.

7. *covered the ark and the staves thereof above*] The ark appears to have been placed lengthwise, (the length was two cubits and a half,) beneath the wings of the cherubim. Thus the staves also would lie along in the rings and so be overshadowed by the wings.

8. *And they drew out the staves*] The verb either means transitively 'to make long' or intransitively 'to be long,' and the better rendering is 'the staves were long.' We are nowhere told how long the staves were made, but no doubt they were of considerable length that there might be no danger of the bearers touching the sacred coffer. Philippson (*die Israelitische Bibel*) says the old staves were ten cubits long, but that for this occasion, according to some Jewish commentators, new staves and longer ones had been made that more priests might take a share in the carrying. To join on easily to the following clause we must render **the staves were so long.**

that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place] Instead of

out in the holy *place* before the oracle, and they were not seen without: and there they are unto this day. *There was* 9
nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, when the LORD made *a covenant* with

'out in' the Hebrew has **from**, and the sense is that, somehow or other, the heads of the staves were to be seen by persons looking from the holy place towards the oracle. It is noteworthy that in 2 Chron. v. 9 it is said 'the staves were seen *from* the ark.'

and [R.V. better, **but**] *they were not seen without*] That is to say, when any one went towards the porch and stood at the entrance of the holy place, the heads of the staves were no longer visible. The whole description must refer to occasions when the entrance into the holy of holies was open, but why it is inserted it is hard to say, for it appears to explain nothing, and to be of itself somewhat inexplicable. The ark was not seen at all, but one standing near the division between the holy place and the most holy might at such a time see the ends of the staves, though if he were as far away as the length of the holy place, he could not see them. The phrase in 2 Chron. v. 9 would then signify that they were seen *as they projected from* the ark.

and there they are unto this day] To have allowed these words to remain bespeaks a singularly close copyist. They appear also in the parallel passage in 2 Chronicles (v. 9). They were no doubt written first when the Temple was still standing, but could not have been true either for the compiler of the Kings or of Chronicles. They are omitted by the LXX.

9. There was *nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone*] We read in Heb. ix. 4 that in the ark of the covenant 'was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded' as well as the tables of the covenant, and we may be sure that the writer there speaks according to tradition. The Old Testament narrative (Exod. xvi. 34) says that the pot of manna was laid up 'before the testimony' and the same expression is used (Numb. xvii. 10) concerning Aaron's rod. This does not define whether they were put inside or on the outside of the ark. But it is most probable that during the time when the ark was moved from place to place they were kept inside it, but as soon as it was placed within the Temple they were removed. For the tables of stone were alone intended to be stored in the ark, being 'the testimony (Ex. xxv. 16) which God had given to Israel.' The other things would still be 'before the testimony' if they were placed outside.

when the Lord made a covenant] There is no word for 'covenant' in the Hebrew, but the verb is the technical term used in this sense, meaning literally 'to cut' in allusion to the sacrifices which usually accompanied covenant-making. No doubt by this time the verb alone had come to have the sense of 'making a covenant.' So the italics of the A. V. are rather misleading. The same verb without any noun following is found in this sense 1 Sam. xi. 2; xx. 16, and in other places. The verse is a little expanded but not changed in sense in the LXX.

the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of
10 Egypt. And it came to pass, when the priests were come
out of the holy *place*, that the cloud filled the house of the
11 LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister be-
cause of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the
house of the LORD.
12 Then spake Solomon, The LORD said that *he* would dwell
13 in the thick darkness. I have surely built thee a house to
14 dwell in, a settled place for thee to abide in for ever. And

Josephus adds here an account of the other furniture of the Temple, with the position which it occupied, and adds, what no doubt he had seen in his own time, that the brazen altar stood before the shrine, straight opposite the outer door, so that when that was thrown open the altar was visible, and the priestly acts and the completion of the sacrifice could all be seen. This is, in a way, a comment on verse 8. The people outside could see through all the length of the holy place, but only one coming near to the partition, could, when the door into the most holy was open, notice the extended heads of the staves.

10. *the cloud filled the house of the Lord*] *The* cloud was the veil which hid the glory of the Lord. The article denotes that it was something well known and perhaps permanent. Cf. Exod. xl. 34, 35 where it is said 'the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting because the cloud abode thereon.' This was the token that God had taken up His abode there, and thus a standing lesson was before the eyes of the people concerning the fact of the Incarnation. Josephus says of this cloud that 'it produced in the minds of all the notion and thought that God had come down into the Temple, and was gladly tabernacling therein.' It was indeed the Shechinah, the dwellingplace of God.

11. *could not stand to minister*] i.e. At the altar of incense which stood within the holy place. God's presence was diffused through every part of the edifice, thus claiming the whole as set apart to Him.

12—21. SOLOMON'S OPENING BLESSING. (2 Chron. vi. 1—11.)

12. *The Lord said that* he *would dwell in the thick darkness*] Better, as in 2 Chron. vi. 1, 'The Lord **hath** said, &c.' The king's words are called forth by what he sees: the house enveloped in a thick cloud such that none could remain within nor enter. The allusion is to Lev. xvi. 2, where God says 'I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat.' Cf. Ps. xcvii. 2, 'Clouds and darkness are round about Him.' So too God speaks of coming to Moses 'in a thick cloud,' Exod. **xix. 9; xx. 21.**

13. *I have surely built thee a house to dwell in*] R. V. '**a house of habitation**,' which is more literal, but not a more elegant rendering. The king sees that God has deigned to accept the house that has been

the king turned his face about, and blessed all the congregation of Israel: (and all the congregation of Israel stood;) and he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, which spake 15
with his mouth unto David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled *it*, saying, Since the day that I brought forth 16
my people Israel out of Egypt, I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build a house, that my name might be therein; but I chose David to be over my people Israel.

built, and his desire that God may always dwell there fashions the language which he uses. It is to be noted that in this dedication the priests play but a secondary part. Zadok is not once named. Solomon presides, speaks, prays. The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits these two verses altogether, but gives a modification and enlargement of them at verse 53 below. See note there. Josephus describes the opening of Solomon's address to God as 'words which the king considered fit to be addressed to the divine Being, and which it was right for him to speak.'

14. *And the king turned his face about*] He had spoken at first looking towards the Temple, and beholding the cloud which told that God was there.

and blessed all the congregation] The words which follow (15—21) are not words of benediction on the people, but thanksgiving to God. We must suppose the language of blessing to have been like the blessing which follows later on in the chapter (57—61) where the king does ask for guidance and help for Israel.

15. *the Lord God of Israel*] R.V. 'The Lord, the God of Israel.' This change, which should be constantly made, will not be further noticed. See chap. i. 30.

which spake with his mouth unto David my father] The allusion is to the words of 2 Sam. vii. 5—7, where God by the prophet Nathan forbids David to build Him a house. The prophet is regarded so entirely as the mouthpiece of Jehovah, that Solomon can use words like these both here, and in ver. 24, 'Thou spakest also with thy mouth.'

16. *that my name might be therein*] The expression in the Pentateuch is constant about the place which is dedicated to the worship of God: 'God records His name there' (Exod. xx. 24); 'God chooses it to put His name there' (Deut. xii. 5); 'God chooses it to cause His name to dwell there' (Deut. xii. 11). In Exodus xx. 24 the phrase is 'in all places,' because by that code it was contemplated that the place set apart for worship would be changed from time to time, and before the one permanent place was fixed upon, there would be many places where God was worshipped. Deuteronomy represents the ideal to be aimed at when the people were established in Canaan.

but I chose David] This is expanded in 2 Chron. vi. 6 so as to include both the place and the person. 'But I have chosen Jerusalem that my name might be there; and have chosen David to be over my people Israel.' The LXX. also has the same clause. The language

17 And it was in the heart of David my father to build a house
18 for the name of the LORD God of Israel. And the LORD said unto David my father, Whereas it was in thine heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in
19 thine heart. Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house; but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall
20 build the house unto my name. And the LORD hath performed his word that he spake, and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised, and have built a house for the name of
21 the LORD God of Israel. And I have set there a place for the ark, wherein *is* the covenant of the LORD, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt.

22 And Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in the

of this verse in Kings seems almost to imply some opposition (or difference in the way of choice) between the material structure and the person.

17. *And it was in the heart*, &c. The conjunction is better rendered in 2 Chron. vi. 7, '**Now** it was in the heart.' The two should be alike.

19. *thou shalt not build the house*] It was not necessary for Solomon to add the reasons given in 1 Chron. xxii. 8, 'Thou hast shed blood abundantly and hast made great wars.'

21. *the ark, wherein* is *the covenant of the Lord*] It has just been said (ver. 9) that only the two tables of stone were in the ark. They must then be meant by 'the covenant of the Lord,' and this is borne out by such passages as Deut. iv. 23, xxix. 25, where the covenant alluded to forms a part of the ten commandments. But 'the book of the covenant' (Exod. xxiv. 7) appears to have included all the laws contained in Exod. xx.—xxiii.

22—53. SOLOMON'S PRAYER. (2 Chron. vi. 12—42.)

22. *And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord*] This was the altar of burnt offerings which stood in the Temple court. In 2 Chron. vi. 13 we have an explanation which is omitted here, "For Solomon had made a brazen scaffold of five cubits long, and five cubits broad, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court, and upon it he stood and kneeled down before all the congregation of Israel." (See note on verse 54.)

Josephus gives as the opening of this prayer a passage utterly foreign to the character of Solomon's words. "It is not possible for men by what they do to give God thanks for the benefits they have received. For the divinity is in need of nothing and is above all such requital. But with that wherein we are made by Thee, O Lord, superior to other living creatures, with that we are bound to bless Thy majesty and to

presence of all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands *toward* heaven: and he said,

23 LORD God of Israel, *there is* no God like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart: 24 who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him: thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled *it* with thine hand, as *it is* this day. 25 Therefore now, LORD God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him, saying, There shall not fail thee a man in my sight to sit on the throne of Israel; so that thy children take heed to their way, that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me. 26 And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified, which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father.

27 But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how

give thanks for what Thou hast wrought for my house, and for the people of the Hebrews. For with what is it more fitting that we should supplicate Thee, whether Thou be angry or continuest gracious, than with the voice which we derive from the air and know to be sent back through the same medium?"

23. *who keepest covenant and mercy*] The phrase is found in Deut. vii. 9, 12. In God's intent, the covenant and the mercy were the same thing. It was transgression on man's part which called forth any other character in the covenant.

with thy servants] The LXX. has the singular, thus restricting the allusion in verses 23—26 entirely to David and his family. The Hebrew by the plural represents the spirit of the phrase in Deuteronomy, and the supplication becomes an appeal to God that He will remember towards David's race the promise which at first was made to all Israel. See Chap. ii. 4 and 2 Sam. vii. 12, &c.

25. *so that thy children take heed*] In modern English 'so that'='if only,' 'provided that,' is not common, but was so when the A.V. was made. Cf. Shakespeare, *All's Well*, ii. 4. 20, "*So that* you had her wrinkles, and I her money, I would she did as you say." See also *Richard II.* iii. 4. 102. The R.V. has the modern **'if only'** and the LXX. represents the sense by πλὴν ἐάν.

27. *will God in very deed dwell on the earth?*] The LXX. adds 'with men.'

the heaven and heaven of heavens] The expression is found in Deut. x. 14; Ps. lxvii. 36, cxiii. 16, and is used to express the widest compass of heaven.

this house which I have builded] The LXX. adds 'for Thy name'

much less this house that I have builded? Yet have thou
28 respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the cry and to the
29 prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day: that thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, *even* toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that *thou* mayest hearken unto the prayer
30 which thy servant shall make towards this place. And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

31 If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come
32 before thine altar in this house: then hear thou *in* heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked,

28. *Yet have thou respect*] Literally the Hebrew is "Yet thou wilt have respect." The tense is chosen to intimate the assurance in the mind of the king that the prayers made will be answered.

29. even *toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there*] These words refer back to verse 16, and appear to imply all that is contained in the expansion there alluded to from 2 Chron. vi. 6 that God had chosen Jerusalem as the place for His temple. 'My name' indicates God's revelation of Himself with all His attributes.

towards this place] For the king was not in the Temple but looking towards it, as would be the case with all future worshippers except the priests who were allowed to enter into the building. Hence it came to pass that in foreign lands the Israelite turned his face in the direction of Jerusalem. Cf. Dan. vi. 10; Jonah ii. 4; Ps. v. 7.

31. *If any man trespass*] Here Solomon enters on a series of specific petitions, the first of which is concerning any case of trespass, in which he implores that God would uphold the sanctity of an oath. The sense of 'trespass' in this verse must be='be supposed to have trespassed.' The person presumed to have offended is to be challenged to take an oath, and to God is left the punishment of the guilty and the acquittal of the innocent. Cf. Exod. xxii. 7—11.

and the oath come] It is better to take both words as verbs and supply a copulative. Render "**and he come and swear.**"

32. *then hear thou* in *heaven*] As the truth in such a case as is supposed can be known to God alone, He is prayed to act the part assigned to judges in the Law (cf. Deut. xxv. 1) and to make known in His own way which persons take the oath justly, and which unjustly. The close imitation of the language of Deuteronomy deserves to be noticed.

to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.

When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, 33
because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: then hear thou *in* heaven, and 34
forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.

When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because 35
they have sinned against thee; if they pray towards this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them: then hear thou *in* heaven, and forgive 36
the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.

If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, 37

33. *When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy*] Such an event is contemplated in the language of Leviticus (xxvi. 17) and Deuteronomy (xxviii. 25) as well as the restoration and delivery of the people on their repentance (see Lev. xxvi. 40—42).

because they have sinned against thee] From what follows it seems as if idolatry, to which the people were so prone, were noted as the special sin. They have turned away from God, and so are to turn to Him again. The penalty constantly threatened for serving strange gods was that they should be made to serve strangers in a land which was not theirs. Cf. Deut. xxviii. 47 seqq.

35. *When heaven is shut up*] The king next intreats against a plague of drought. This also had been proclaimed in the Pentateuch as one of God's methods of discipline and punishment. So Deut. xi. 17 the people are warned to beware of sin lest the Lord shut up the heaven that there be no rain; and in Deuteronomy (xxviii. 23) and Leviticus (xxvi. 19) the striking phrase is used 'I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass.'

36. *forgive the sin of thy servants and of thy people Israel*] Probably Solomon means by 'servants' the kings who should hereafter reign over Israel. The LXX. evidently thought this, for there we only have 'thy servant' meaning the king at the time being.

that thou teach them] The rendering should rather be 'when thou teachest them,' as at the close of the previous verse. The forgiveness is to come, when the lesson of chastisement has been given and learnt.

37. *If there be in the land famine*] In this verse the king gathers together various judgements which God had threatened on His people if they sinned. For famine cf. Lev. xxvi. 20; Deut. xi. 17: for blasting and mildew, Deut. xxviii. 22; for locust, Deut. xxviii. 38. The parti-

blasting, mildew, locust, *or* if there be caterpillar; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities; whatsoever
38 plague, whatsoever sickness *there be;* what prayer and supplication soever be *made* by any man, *or* by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own
39 heart, and spread forth his hands towards this house: then hear thou *in* heaven thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; (for thou, *even* thou only, knowest the
40 hearts of all the children of men;) that they may fear thee all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers.

41 Moreover concerning a stranger, that *is* not of thy people

cular insect rendered 'caterpillar' in this verse is not mentioned in the Pentateuch, but we know from Joel ii. 25, that some other kind, or stage of development, of locust is meant by it. In Deut. xxviii. 42 we have mention of an insect, also rendered 'locust,' which has a different name in the original from that spoken of in verse 38 of the same chapter. The siege by an enemy is threatened in Deut. xxviii. 52.

in the land of their cities] The Hebrew word translated 'cities' usually signifies 'gates,' and it is so rendered Deut. xxviii. 52 'He shall besiege thee in all thy gates.' But in 'gates' the 'cities,' which alone possessed them, are implied. The LXX. and other versions have 'in one of their cities.' The Vulg. has 'gates.'

38. *which shall know every man the plague of his own heart*] i.e. The special infliction which is sent to him for his own correction, and for the relief of which he only can fitly pray.

39. *whose heart thou knowest*] This is the other aspect. God will know whether the discipline have wrought its effect, whether the heart have been plagued in such wise as to bring about repentance.

40. *that they may fear thee*] i.e. Being instructed and warned by God's judgements may cease to offend and in consequence need no more correction. Cf. Ps. cxxx. 4. 'There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.'

41. *Moreover concerning a stranger*] Consideration for the stranger was a marked feature of the Jewish legislation. Cf. Exod. xxii. 21, xxiii. 9, 12, &c. So he is not to be excluded from spiritual privileges. Josephus makes Solomon enlarge on this characteristic thus: "And I do not ask from Thee this help for the Hebrews alone when they offend; but even if any come from the ends of the earth, or from any land whatever and wish in this place to make petition unto Thee, hearken and grant their request. For thus it will be known to all men that Thou hast wished this house to be built for Thee by us, and that we are not unnatural nor hostile to strangers, but gladly desire that Thy help and the advantage of Thy blessings should be shared by all." The last sentence tells of the opinion, which in the days of Josephus

Israel, but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake;
(for they shall hear of thy great name, and of thy strong 42
hand, and of thy stretched out arm;) when he shall come
and pray towards this house; hear thou *in* heaven thy 43
dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger
calleth to thee for: that all people of the earth may know
thy name, to fear thee, as *do* thy people Israel; and that
they may know that this house, which I have builded, is
called by thy name.

If thy people go out to battle against their enemy, 44
whithersoever thou shalt send them, and shall pray unto
the LORD toward the city which thou hast chosen, and
toward the house that I have built for thy name: then hear 45
thou *in* heaven their prayer and their supplication, and
maintain their cause. If they sin against thee, (for *there is* 46

prevailed among the heathen, that the Jews were haters of the rest of mankind. For this sentiment cf. Juvenal XIV. 103, 104. Tac. *Hist.* V. 5.

for thy name's sake] i.e. Having heard of Thy wondrous works performed for Israel.

42. *of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched out arm*] A constant phrase in Deuteronomy to express God's power, see Deut. iii. 24, iv. 34, v. 15, &c. The greater part of verse 41 and the whole of 42 are omitted in the LXX. (*Vat.*).

when he shall come and pray towards this house] For the earlier provision whereby the stranger might be admitted to share in the worship of Israel, see Numb. xv. 14. The rule was "as ye do, so shall he do."

43. *that this house...is called by thy name*] The literal rendering of the Hebrew 'that thy name is called upon this house,' though not so good English, brings out more of the true notion of the words *viz.*, that God has taken up His abode there, and that there men may approach very near unto Him.

44. *If thy people go out to battle*] The case here is of a war undertaken by God's direction, and therefore in a righteous cause. Under such circumstances the people may trust in Him for support.

shall pray unto the Lord toward the city] Not only the Jews but other people were wont to turn their faces toward some sacred spot when praying in a distant land, as Daniel did in Babylon (Dan. vi. 10). Thus the Mohammedans turn towards Mecca, and the early Christians inherited from the Jews the custom of turning to the east when they prayed. Cf. Tert. *Apol.* 16.

46. *If they sin against thee*] With the language of these verses concerning the delivery of Israel into the hand of their enemies for their sins, the chapters of Leviticus (xxvi.) and Deuteronomy (xxviii.)

no man that sinneth not,) and thou be angry with them,
and deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them
47 away captives unto the land of the enemy, far or near; *yet*
if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they
were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication
unto thee in the land of them *that* carried them captives,
saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have
48 committed wickedness; and *so* return unto thee with all
their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their
enemies, which led them away captive, and pray unto thee
toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the
city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have
49 built for thy name: then hear thou their prayer and their
supplication *in* heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain
50 their cause, and forgive thy people that have sinned against
thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have trans-
gressed against thee, and give them compassion before them
who carried them captive, that they may have compassion
51 on them: for they *be* thy people, and thine inheritance,
which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst
52 of the furnace of iron: that thine eyes may be open unto
the supplication of thy servant, and unto the supplication of
thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call

already frequently quoted should be compared. Though the verbal resemblance is less than in some other parts of this prayer, the idea and spirit of the language is exactly the same.

49. *and maintain their cause*] The words are the same as in verse 45, but the idea is a little different. There the 'cause' was a righteous war undertaken at God's direction; here the phrase implies that God shall do His people right by delivering them from their oppressors. For though God may use the heathen as His instruments He does not always approve of the conduct they exhibit. On this cf. Isaiah x. 5—16. The literal meaning of the Hebrew is 'do them right' or 'work out their right.'

50. *give them compassion*] So God stirred up the heart of Cyrus to permit Israel to return from Babylon (Ezra i. 1).

51. *from the midst of the furnace of iron*] The bondage of Egypt is so called, Deut. iv. 20. The idea is of the intense heat needed to melt iron in a furnace, and that with this the suffering of Israel might be compared. Cf. Is. xlviii. 10; Jer. xi. 14.

52. *in all that they call for unto thee*] The Hebrew is literally 'In all their crying unto thee,' which R. V. represents more nearly by **whensoever they cry unto thee.**

for unto thee. For thou didst separate them from among 53
all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou
spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou
broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD.

And it was *so, that* when Solomon had made an end of 54
praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he
arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on

53. *As thou spakest by the hand of Moses*] The reference is to Exod. xix. 5, 6, where God promises that Israel shall be to Him 'a peculiar treasure.' 'By the hand of' is a not uncommon Hebrew phrase for 'by' (see below verse 56), and it is so represented in A. V. Thus Is. xx. 2, 'the Lord spake by Isaiah,' the original has 'by the hand of.' So in Malachi i. 1 'by Malachi' is 'by the hand of Malachi.' At this point there occurs in 2 Chron. (vi. 40–42) a large addition thus: 'Now, my God, let, I beseech thee, thine eyes be open, and let thine ears be attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. Now therefore arise, O Lord God, into thy resting place, thou and the ark of thy strength: let thy priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation, and let thy saints rejoice in goodness. O Lord God, turn not away the face of thine anointed: remember the mercies of David thy servant.' These words may have belonged to the original document and be the groundwork of Ps. cxxxii., or the Chronicler may have given a free variation and borrowed from the Psalm.

In the LXX. there is also an addition of a different kind after verse 53. It purports to be something which was written ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ᾠδῆς, 'in the book of song' and is made up of allusions to verses 12 and 13 of this chapter, and, as it stands, is not very intelligible. The translation would be 'The sun he made known in heaven, the Lord hath said that he will dwell in darkness. Build my house, a comely house for thyself to dwell in. Behold, is it not written in the book of song?' Prof. Robertson Smith has discussed this passage in the notes (pp. 403, 404) to his 'Old Testament in the Jewish Church,' and by certain, not very startling corrections, he gives a restored version thus:

> Jehovah created the sun in the heavens,
> But he hath determined to dwell in darkness.
> Build my house, an house of habitation for me,
> A place to dwell in eternally.
> Behold is it not written in the book of Jashar?

54 61. SOLOMON'S CLOSING BENEDICTION. (Not in Chronicles.)

54. *he arose from before the altar*] In verse 22 we are only told that Solomon stood before the altar. It appears from this verse that the addition in 2 Chron. vi. 13, where we read that he first stood and then kneeled down before the people, gives the correct idea of what took place. Josephus tells us that at the close of the prayer the king cast himself upon the ground and continued worshipping a long time, after which he arose and offered sacrifices.

55 his knees with his hands spread *up to* heaven. And he
stood, and blessed all the congregation of Israel *with* a loud
56 voice, saying, Blessed *be* the LORD, that hath given rest
unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised:
there hath not failed one word of all his good promise,
57 which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant. The
LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let
58 him not leave us, nor forsake us: that *he* may incline our
hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his
commandments, and his statutes, and his judgements, which
59 he commanded our fathers. And let these my words,
wherewith I have made supplication before the LORD, be
nigh unto the LORD our God day and night, that *he* maintain
the cause of his servant, and the cause of his people Israel
60 at all times, as the matter shall require: that all the people
of the earth may know that the LORD *is* God, *and that there*
61 *is* none else. Let your heart therefore be perfect with the
LORD our God, to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.

56. *that hath given rest unto his people*] For Solomon's reign was to be specially a time of peace (cf. 1 Kings ii. 33), and it was only in a time of profound tranquillity that the great works of the Temple and the king's house could have been carried out. This no doubt was the idea of the LXX., who make this verse commence 'Blessed be the Lord *to-day*.'

58. *that* he *may incline our hearts unto him*] Which will not happen if He leave or forsake His people.

59. *be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night*] That He may have them always in remembrance.

as the matter shall require] The Hebrew is 'the thing of a day in its day' and the R.V. gives 'as every day shall require,' which brings it a little closer to the original, but with no different sense from A.V.

60. *that all the people of the earth may know*] This was always the view of the pious Israelite that God's glory might be known among all nations. Cf. Josh. iv. 24; 1 Sam. xvii. 46. There is nothing in 2 Chronicles of the verses 54—61, but preceding the account of the sacrifices we are told (2 Chron. vii. 1—3) that fire came down from heaven (which Josephus also speaks of at this point of the narrative) and consumed the burnt-offering and the sacrifice, that the glory of God filled the house so that the priests could not enter, and that at the sight thereof all the people worshipped and praised the Lord. After this the narrative continues in parallelism with 1 Kings.

61. *perfect*] i.e. 'Entirely surrendered' (*shâlâm*). So in Arabic *islam*=religion as entire submission; *moslem*, the religious man as entirely devoted.

And the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice 62
before the LORD. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace 63
offerings, which he offered unto the LORD, two and twenty
thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep.
So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the
house of the LORD. The same day did the king hallow the 64
middle of the court that *was* before the house of the LORD:
for there he offered burnt offerings, and meat offerings, and
the fat of the peace offerings: because the brasen altar that
was before the LORD *was* too little to receive the burnt
offerings, and meat offerings, and the fat of the peace offer-

62—66. THE GREAT SACRIFICE AND FESTIVAL. (2 Chron. vii. 4—11.)

63. *And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings*] It is ordered in the Law (Lev. vii. 15) that the greatest part of such peace offerings shall be eaten at the time of the offering. The fat and certain internal portions of the victim are to be consumed in the fire on the altar, but all else is to go for food. This explains in part the enormous number of animals mentioned in this verse. Not only among the Jews, but among all ancient nations, sacrifices were feasts, sometimes on a very large scale. Homer supplies abundant instances. The dedication of the Temple was an event for which all who could come were sure to assemble, and for the support of such an enormous crowd for fourteen days (cf. 2 Chron. vii. 8, 9) the supply here mentioned need not be thought excessive. Great multitudes can assemble in Eastern climates, where the shelter of a roof at night is not a necessity, with less preparation, except for actual food, than is required in western lands. Josephus says "all the Hebrews feasted with their wives and children, moreover also the king celebrated the feast which is called the feast of Tabernacles grandly and magnificently before the Temple, feasting together with all the people."

two and twenty thousand oxen] Contrary to his custom Josephus gives here a smaller number than that in the Hebrew text. He says twelve thousand oxen, but keeps the same number, one hundred and twenty thousand, for the sheep. Though it be said that the king offered this large sacrifice, we need not suppose that any great part of the offering was performed by him personally or in his presence. The next verse shows that provision was made for offering sacrifices in other places than on the brazen altar, viz. on temporary altars set up for the occasion.

64. *meat offerings*] These consisted (see Lev. ii. 4—7) of fine flour with oil and incense. In modern English the sense of 'meat' has become so restricted to flesh, that the R.V., to give a nearer idea of the true nature of the offering, has changed the word to **meal-offering**, though this does not quite adequately convey the meaning. In 2 Chron. vii. 6 we read that the Levites accompanied these sacrifices with music, on instruments which David had made for religious services, and the priests blew the trumpets before them.

65 ings. And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the LORD our
66 God, seven days and seven days, *even* fourteen days. On the eighth day he sent the people away: and they blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people.

9 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the

65. *Solomon held a feast*] Better 'the feast.' The special feast of Tabernacles (cf. verse 2), a very fitting occasion for the great multitude to make themselves an encampment in the open country around.

The part played by Solomon in all this dedication ceremony shews us that the ordinances of the Pentateuch had not yet come into observance. Israel had not advanced beyond the traditional religion contained in the 'book of the covenant'. But the failure of the nation herein cannot of itself be held to establish the non-existence of the Levitical law.

from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt] Within these limits the whole land of Palestine was embraced. Hamath on the north was situated in the valley of the Orontes, and for a long time was the chief city of the northern part of Syria. On the south the river of Egypt (*nahal Mizraim*) is identified for us in the LXX. (Is. xxvii. 12) by being translated ὁ ποταμὸς ἕως Ῥινοκορούρων. Rhinocoroura (i.e. Rhinocolura) is the modern *El Arish*, and so the *nahal Mizraim* was probably *Wady el Arîsh*, a desert stream on the border of Egypt.

before the Lord our God] The last two words have the appearance of an editorial addition. They would hardly appear in the original narrative.

seven days and seven days] As explained in 2 Chron. vii. 9 the dedication of the altar lasted seven days, and the feast (of Tabernacles proper) other seven days. This double observance accounts for the form of words here used.

66. *On the eighth day*] i.e. Of the feast of Tabernacles, which had been preceded on this occasion by the feast of Dedication. Therefore this was the fifteenth day of the whole ceremony. It is defined in 2 Chron. vii. 10 as 'the three and twentieth day of the seventh month.'

and they blessed the king] Josephus explains thus: 'they went away thanking the king for his forethought about them, and for the conduct which he had exhibited towards them, and praying God to give them Solomon as their king for a long time to come.'

and went unto their tents] The expression is a survival from those times when the home was a tent. Cf. 2 Sam. xviii. 17, xix. 8.

CH. IX. 1—9. GOD'S SECOND APPEARANCE UNTO SOLOMON (2 Chron. vii. 11—22.)

1. *when Solomon had finished*] We read (1 Kings vi. 38) that Solomon was seven years in building the Temple, and in vii. 1 that he

building of the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do, that 2
the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon. And the LORD said unto 3
him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there for ever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And 4

was thirteen years building his own house. We find also below (in verse 10) that these periods were not reckoned concurrently, but that the whole period was twenty years. Hence arises a difficulty with regard to this second appearance of God to the king. From the words of God's message "I have heard thy prayer &c." (verse 3) it is plain that this second vision was an answer to the dedication prayer. Was then the dedication of the Temple, though the structure was completed in seven years, delayed until all the rest of Solomon's works were ended? Or was the answer of God delayed through the thirteen years that elapsed between the finishing of the Temple and the finishing of the king's house? We can hardly accept the latter supposition as possible. It appears far more likely that the dedication was delayed. And this may have been necessary because of the amount of time which Hiram would need for casting the metal-work, the greater part of which was for things that were unconnected with the actual Temple-building. This work from its nature could be undertaken only by persons specially skilled, of whom the number would be limited, and in consequence of this the work might be spread over a long time.

all Solomon's desire] The noun implies something by which special store was set, a special fancy. It seems to indicate that the king had gone to much nicety in his building schemes. The LXX. gives *πραγματεία*, perhaps in the sense of 'careful carrying out of any plan'. In 2 Chron. vii. 11, it is said 'he prosperously effected all that came into his heart to make.'

2. *the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time*] In 2 Chron. we are told that this was 'by night,' therefore in a vision. Josephus says 'a vision appearing to the king in his sleep shewed him that God had hearkened to his prayer.'

at Gibeon] Cf. on iii. 5 above.

3. *I have heard thy prayer*] This could not have been the form of God's message, if thirteen years had passed away since the dedication. God's way is rather that spoken of by Isaiah lxv. 24 'While they are yet speaking I will hear.' The LXX. adds after the first clause of this verse 'I have done for thee according to all thy prayer.'

to put my name there for ever] The place which God had chosen was now made known; and God's purposes change not.

mine eyes and mine heart shall be there] As in the former vision at Gibeon, God had given more than Solomon asked, so it is here. The

if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded thee, *and* wilt keep my statutes
5 and my judgments: then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the
6 throne of Israel. *But* if you shall at all turn from following me, you or your children, and will not keep my commandments *and* my statutes which I have set before you, but go
7 and serve other gods, and worship them: then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them; and *this* house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight; and Israel shall be a proverb and a byword

prayer was that God's eyes might be open toward the house, the promise is that His heart shall be there perpetually.

This verse is largely expanded in 2 Chron. vii. 12 seqq. thus: 'I have heard thy prayer and have chosen this place to myself for an house of sacrifice. If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. Now mine eyes shall be open and mine ears attent unto the prayer that is made in this place. For now I have chosen and sanctified this house that my name may be there for ever.' This addition appears to be the work of a later writer who wished to express by it, that God's answer was as large as the king's prayer.

4. *I have commanded thee*] The LXX. reads 'I commanded him,' making the clause refer to David.

6. But *if you shall at all turn from following me*] The insertion of 'at all' here is an attempt to give some force to the Hebrew construction. It is a peculiarity of that language to use the infinitive of a verb followed by a finite tense to give emphasis to an expression. But undoubtedly 'at all' weakens the sense here. God's warning is against *utter apostasy*, going and serving other gods. Hence there is more force in R.V. **If ye shall turn away from following me.**

and *my statutes*] There is no conjunction between the two nouns here, but there is in the parallel place in 2 Chronicles and in the versions it is represented. So small a letter as ו could easily drop out.

which I have set before you] The LXX. has 'which Moses gave before you.'

7. *then will I cut off*] We have once more a passage very parallel to Deut. iv. 26, xxviii. 37, 45, 63, where 'an astonishment, a proverb and a by-word' occurs, as here.

this *house...will I cast out of my sight*] It is not here declared what shall be the consequence of God's disregard but the idea of destruction

among all people: and *at* this house, *which* is high, every 8
one that passeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss;
and they shall say, Why hath the LORD done thus unto this
land, and to this house? And they shall answer, Because 9
they forsook the LORD their God, who brought forth their
fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon
other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them:
therefore hath the LORD brought upon them all this evil.

And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when 10
Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD,
and the king's house, (*now* Hiram the king of Tyre had 11
furnished Solomon with cedar trees and fir trees, and with
gold, according to all his desire,) *that* then king Solomon
gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And 12

must have been present to him who heard of God's face being turned away. It is just the opposite of what the king had prayed for, that God's eyes should be always open towards the Temple.

8. *And* at *this house* which *is high*] The connexion of these words is very difficult. The Hebrew text, standing alone, must be rendered 'And this house shall be high.' But in 2 Chron. the relative is expressed, and there can be little doubt that the text here is somehow faulty. The passage in 2 Chron. (vii. 21) reads 'And this house which is high shall be an astonishment.' To come as near to this sense as possible, while introducing no relative, R.V. gives '**And though this house be high.**' Yet that rendering is somewhat doubtful. The text of the LXX. shows that they had our Hebrew before them: *καὶ ὁ οἶκος οὗτος ἔσται ὁ ὑψηλός, πᾶς ὁ διαπορευόμενος κ.τ.λ.*

9. *out of the land of Egypt*] The LXX. adds 'out of the house of bondage.'

The two verses 8, 9 are remarkably parallel to the language of Deuteronomy xxix. 21—26.

10—14. SOLOMON'S GIFT TO HIRAM KING OF TYRE.
(Not in Chronicles.)

10. *at the end of twenty years*] See vi. 38 and vii. 1.

11. now *Hiram the king...had furnished*, &c.] We read of the supply of timber in v. 10, but the gold mentioned here does not appear in the earlier narrative. From verse 14 below we learn that the amount was 'six score talents.' Taking the value of a talent of gold at £6000 this sum would be worth £720,000. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 5, 3) says Hiram had contributed much gold and still more silver.

Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee] These would most likely be in the extreme northern border of Galilee and so not remote from Hiram's frontier. But they would be inland cities and no doubt, to a maritime people like the Tyrians, some territory along the seaboard would have been more acceptable. Josephus specially notes

Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon
13 had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said,
What cities *are* these which thou hast given me, my brother?
14 And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day. And
Hiram sent to the king sixscore talents of gold.
15 And this *is* the reason of the levy which king Solomon
raised; for to build the house of the LORD, and his own

that the cities were not far from Tyre. The region in which they were situate was that called (Is. viii. 23) 'Galilee of the nations' to indicate that the inhabitants were yet in heathendom. This might be a reason why Solomon chose them for his present to the Tyrian king.

12. *came out from Tyre*] The LXX. adds 'and went into Galilee.'

13. *What cities* are *these which thou hast given me?*] No doubt spoken with a tone of reproach and disappointment. The language of Josephus is 'he said to Solomon that he did not want the cities.' They are just alluded to in Chronicles (2 Chron. viii. 2) as 'the cities which Huram restored to Solomon.'

my brother] This form of address between persons of royal rank has been always common. Cf. 1 Kings xx. 32, 33; 1 Macc. x. 18, xi. 30; 2 Macc. xi. 22. It need not necessarily imply friendly feeling.

And he called them] Or the Hebrew may mean 'and one called them' which was a common form to signify 'they were called.' We need not therefore of necessity impute the contemptuous name to Hiram. Josephus gives προσηγορεύθησαν.

the land of Cabul] This appellation was given to indicate, what is stated in the text, that they were unsatisfactory. But it is not easy to know whence the name comes. There is a town so called in Joshua (xix. 27) which was situated in the tribe of Asher. This tribe was in North Galilee but there would be no significance in the name, if it were already that of one of the twenty cities given to Hiram. The LXX. appears to have taken כבול (*Cabul*) to be the same as גבול (*gebul*) for they render the name Ὅριον, a boundary. Josephus transliterates by Χαβαλών, and adds that this word in Phœnician means 'not pleasing,' an interpretation, as it seems, which he evolved from the context. Some of the Hebrew commentators have connected the name with a verb which in Aramaic signifies 'to bind,' and have explained that the district was sandy or muddy, and that the feet were always deep sunk in the mire. A later derivation has taken the word to mean 'worth nothing,' as if from כ = *as*, and בול = בל = *nothing*. There are many other attempts at explanation but none that can be pronounced satisfactory.

15—25. OF THE LEVY WHICH KING SOLOMON RAISED. (2 Chron. viii. 4—11.)

15. *the reason of the levy*] On the nature and amount of this compulsory service see notes on chap. v. 13 seqq. The present passage explains the whole purpose for which it was enforced.

house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer. *For* Pharaoh king of Egypt had 16
gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire, and slain

and Millo] This word is always found in the original with the definite article 'the Millo' (2 Sam. v. 9; 1 Kings xi. 27; 2 Chron. xi. 8, xxxii. 5). Wherever it occurs it is in connexion with the walls or fortifications of Jerusalem. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 5 it is stated to be in the city of David. Now the most common rendering of the word in the LXX. is ἡ ἄκρα = 'the citadel,' a word which is constantly used in the Books of the Maccabees for the fortress on Mount Zion. It seems probable therefore that 'the Millo' was some specially important, and hence strongly fortified, portion of the oldest walls where they approached most closely to Zion. From 2 Sam. v. 9 we should conclude that the fortress was already existing before David conquered Jerusalem, and the name itself may have been given by the Jebusites.

and Hazor] A strong city, south of Kedesh-Naphtali in the north of Palestine. When the Israelites entered Canaan it was in the possession of king Jabin, but was taken and burnt by Joshua. Standing on a lofty position it was a post of much importance for the defence of the kingdom on the north. For this reason no doubt Solomon fortified it, but it must have already been rebuilt since its destruction by Joshua, for we read of it in Judges iv. 2, 17 as the city of another Jabin, whose commander in chief was Sisera, slain by Jael.

Megiddo] This city (Josh. xii. 21) lay on the south side of the plain of Esdraelon, between Mt. Tabor and the modern bay of St Jean d'Acre, and must have been important as a protection against inroads from the northern highlands and from the direction of Phœnicia, commanding, as it would, the great road from the sea to the plain of the Jordan. Megiddo lay within the tribe of Issachar, but was allotted to Manasseh (Josh. xvii. 11; 1 Chron. vii. 29). The city was famous for the overthrow of Sisera, but most especially as the place where king Josiah was slain in the war against Pharaoh-Necho (2 Kings xxiii. 29).

Gezer] The position of this ancient city has not been identified, and it is not clear that there were not two places of the same name. One Gezer is mentioned (Josh. x. 33) in connexion with Lachish and Eglon and other places in the south part of Canaan, but a Gezer is also spoken of as in the land assigned to the children of Joseph (Josh. xvi. 3), that is, the tribe of Ephraim, and as being not far from Beth-horon. If these two be references to the same place the king of Gezer came a long distance to help the king of Lachish. It seems more likely that they were distinct towns. The Gezer in Ephraim did however remain in the possession of the Canaanites (see Joshua xvi. 10), and so the king of Egypt may have come against it (as we read in the next verse) without being at war with Israel. Yet the fortification by Solomon of a place to protect his dominions on the south makes it perhaps a little more probable that some place nearer Eglon and Lachish is meant in the present passage, for there Canaanites might also be dwelling.

16. For *Pharaoh king of Egypt*] See above on iii. 1.

and taken Gezer] This incursion was probably before Solomon had

the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it *for* a
17 present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife. And Solomon
18 built Gezer, and Beth-horon the nether, and Baalath, and
19 Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land, and all the cities of

taken the king's daughter to wife, though Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 6, 1) says 'he gave it to his daughter who had been married to Solomon.' Philippson (*die Israelitische Bibel*) suggests that Solomon wishing to be rid of these Canaanites asked his father-in-law to undertake their extermination.

and given it for *a present*] By 'present' here is meant 'a wedding-portion.' The noun implies 'a gift on sending away' and the verb is found Josh. xii. 9, where Ibzan the judge is said to have 'sent abroad' (i.e. apparently, portioned out in marriage) his thirty daughters and to have taken in thirty others from abroad as wives for his sons. Though it appears to have been the more usual custom in the East for a husband to make presents to his wife's family, yet we find that Caleb (Judges i. 15) gave lands with his daughter when she was married to Othniel.

17. *and Beth-horon the nether*] This was one of two towns named respectively 'upper' and 'nether' Beth-horon which lay between Gibeon and Azekah, the one at the top of the ascent, the other in the valley westward. The latter, which is the place here mentioned, was important as forming a barrier against foes from the direction of Philistia and Egypt, and for this reason no doubt it was fortified by Solomon. In earlier history the place is famous for Joshua's victory (Josh. x.) over the five kings of the Amorites, and later for the overthrow of the Syrian forces by Judas Maccabaeus (1 Macc. iii.).

18. *and Baalath*] This place is mentioned (Josh. xix. 44) among the places which fell to the tribe of Dan, and must therefore have been on the border of the country of the Philistines, and for that reason we may presume that it was included among the places which Solomon strengthened.

and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land] Here the Hebrew text reads **Tamar**, and Tadmor is only given on the margin (Keri). The R. V. adopts the reading of the text, probably because of the words 'in the land.' All the places mentioned here lie in Palestine, and we know from Ezekiel (xlvii. 19, xlviii. 28) that there was a city Tamar on the south border of the Holy Land, which was towards the wilderness. It seems therefore most likely, as this place is spoken of as 'in the land,' that Tamar should be here preferred, and the position assigned to it in Ezekiel is that of a place which it would be most important to fortify. The marginal reading Tadmor is no doubt due to the mention of Tadmor among the cities which Solomon built in 2 Chron. viii. 4. But there Tadmor is mentioned in connexion with Hamath-Zobah and the conquest of the northern part of the land. This reading may be correct in Chronicles, for with Solomon's ambition to extend his dominion and foster commerce, Tadmor in the wilderness (afterwards so famous as Palmyra) would be a place much to be coveted as a step on the road to Babylon. Tadmor grew famous, and Tamar was well-nigh forgotten, hence we can see how the former name (not mentioned any-

store that Solomon had, and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen, and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem, and in Lebanon, and in all the land of

where but in Chronicles) should be substituted on the margin in the verse before us. It may well be that Solomon occupied both places, but there is no warrant for importing the name Tadmor into Kings, especially as the place here mentioned is spoken of as being 'in the land.'

Josephus is very minute in his account of this city, which he (as was to be expected) says was Tadmor (*Ant.* VIII. 6, 1), 'Having invaded the desert that lies above Syria, and acquired it, he founded there a very great city, two days' journey from upper Syria, and one from the Euphrates, and its distance from the great city of Babylon was six days. And the reason why he built this city so distant from the inhabited parts of Syria was that nowhere in the land lower down was there water, but that there alone were found fountains and wells. So having built the city and surrounded it with very strong walls, he named it Thadamora, and it is still so called by the Syrians, but the Greeks name it Palmyra.'

19. *and all the cities of store*] In 2 Chron. viii. 4 the expression is **store-cities**, which reads better here, and is clearer in sense. These places would be provided so that surplus produce which could be preserved, as corn, oil, wine, &c. might be stored in times of plenty to be ready when need should require. We read that Hezekiah made some similar provision (2 Chron. xxxii. 28).

and cities for his chariots, and cities for his horsemen] Special places must have been needed for these, when we consider the great number of them (see below x. 26). In 1 Chron. iv. 31 there is a place called 'town-of-chariots' *Beth-marcaboth*, and another 'court-of-horses' *Hazar-susim*. The injunction of Deut. xvii. 16 against the multiplication of horses by the king was apparently forgotten or disregarded. But the absence of any allusion to the command has been made by some an argument for the later date of Deuteronomy.

and that which Solomon desired to build] The force of the literal rendering on the margin of A. V. 'the desire of Solomon which he desired to build' is better brought out in the text of R. V. 'that which Solomon desired to build **for his pleasure**.' The noun is the same as in verse 1 of this chapter, and the writer here is evidently distinguishing these later-named works from the former. The first in the list were either fortifications, or strongholds, or store-cities, but the others are for the king's own pleasure and enjoyment. (Cf. on the whole subject, Eccles. ii. 4—8.)

and in Lebanon] The place of all others to which for relaxation the king would retire. The scorching heat of the lower plains could there be escaped, while the fragrance of the vegetation made a residence there most enjoyable. The writer of Solomon's Song paints for us the loveliness of the spot, 'a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and streams from Lebanon' (iv. 15), and again, 'his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars' (v. 15), and 'the smell of thy garments

his dominion. *And* all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, which *were* not of the children of Israel, their children that were left after them in the land, whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy, upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice unto this day. But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondman: but they *were* men of war, and his servants, and his princes,

is like the smell of Lebanon' (iv. 11). But it has been supposed by some that Lebanon is mentioned here as being an important military post.

20. *which* were *not of the children of Israel*] This clause is added because the people of Canaan had become much mixed up among the Israelite population, being still allowed to live in some cities from which at first it had been found impossible to dislodge them (see above, verse 16). But a distinction was made between these people and the people of Israel, now that Solomon was powerful enough to enforce it, in the kind of service they must render and the tribute they must bear. It may be that the five nations here mentioned were most largely represented in the surviving population, and that the other two out of the seven nations of Canaan had by this time been more nearly exterminated.

21. *whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy*] There is no word to represent 'also' in the original, nor does the English sentence require it. The utter destruction spoken of here is that which had been decreed upon them by God's judgement, and which Israel was to be the agent in executing.

upon those did Solomon levy a tribute of bondservice] The Hebrew noun מַס here rendered 'tribute' is applied in a concrete sense to the 'renderers of the tribute.' The verb also here is literally 'he caused to go up.' As the narrative in this verse is dealing entirely with the persons it is better to render (as R.V.) **of these did Solomon raise a levy of bondservants**. Theirs was slave service, such as is alluded to in Joshua xvi. 10.

unto this day] A faithful copying by the compiler of the Books of Kings from some earlier record which lay before him, and which noted the continuation of this forced service for some time after the reign of Solomon.

22. *But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondman*] This must be read in the light of chap. v. 13. There we are told of Solomon's levy upon all Israel. But the 30,000 men there spoken of had duty forced on them only for a month at a time. Ten thousand served for one month, and were two months at home before their turn for service came round again. Moreover, when the work for which they were enrolled came to an end they were free. It may also be that in the course of 20 years Solomon changed his system, especially if he saw that his people were beginning to find his yoke heavy. But the Canaanite levy was continuous 'unto this day.'

his servants] i.e. His officers. The position of the word between

and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. These *were* the chief of the officers that *were* over 23
Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty, which bare rule
over the people that wrought in the work. But Pharaoh's 24
daughter came up out of the city of David unto her house
which *Solomon* had built for her: then did he build Millo.
And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings 25
and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the
LORD, and he burnt incense upon the altar that *was* before
the LORD. So he finished the house.

'men of war' and 'princes' shews that the service here spoken of was a service of dignity. They were such 'servants' as are spoken of in 2 Sam. viii. 7 "And David took the shields of gold that were on the *servants* of Hadadezer."

23. *These* were *the chief of the officers*] Better, with R.V. **the chief officers.** This is a select class out of the whole number of such officers. A greater number, 3300, is spoken of in chap. v. 16, and it may be that while the works in Lebanon, and at the Temple and the king's house, were in progress, the larger number of chief officers was engaged in the supervision; but afterwards, for the ordinary fortification and pleasaunce-building, the smaller number was found sufficient. In 2 Chron. viii. 11, two hundred and fifty is given as the number of these officials. Kennicott explains this variation by the reading of one letter for another in the Hebrew system of indicating numbers by the letters of the alphabet.

24. *But Pharaoh's daughter came up*] On her residence in the city of David, see in iii. 1.

Millo] See above, verse 15.

25. *three times in a year did Solomon offer*] Most likely this means at the three great feasts, the Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. This may be understood in the sense 'qui facit per alium, facit per se'. But some have contended that Solomon himself performed these priestly acts and that consequently the privileges of the Levitical caste were of later origin.

and he burnt incense upon the altar that was before the Lord] The marginal note of A.V. 'upon it' for 'upon the altar' shews where the difficulty in this verse is. The R.V. prefers, instead of 'upon it' to render 'with it,' i.e. **therewith**, and this is supported by the Hebrew punctuation. The translation then becomes 'And he burnt incense therewith, *upon the altar* that was before the Lord,' the italics being added to complete the sense. But the text can hardly be correct to need such an addition.

So he finished the house] It is clear from the language of this verse that the account was not brought into its present form on the completion of the work, but at some later time, when Solomon's offerings at the great feasts had grown into a custom. The verses 15—25 are omitted by the LXX (*Vat.*).

26 And king Solomon made a navy *of ships* in Ezion-geber,
which *is* beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red sea, in the
27 land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants,
shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of
28 Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fet from thence

26—28. SOLOMON'S NAVY. (2 Chron. viii. 17—18.)

26. *in Ezion-geber*] The name signifies 'the Giant's chine,' and it was probably a promontory. Ezion-geber is mentioned first in the narrative of the journey of the Israelites from Egypt (Numb. xxxiii. 35). It was the last halting-place before they entered the wilderness of Zin. It lay at the top of the gulf of Akabah. Here was also Eloth (*or* Elath) of which we read (2 Kings xiv. 22) that, though it is here said to be in the land of Edom, it was conquered for Judah at a later time, and still later (2 Kings xvi. 6) came into the possession of Rezin king of Syria.

In reference to this navy, we are told (2 Chron. viii. 18) that Hiram sent Solomon the ships. Putting that passage side by side with this, it can only mean that the wood for ship-building was brought from Tyre along the coast as far as was necessary, and then at the nearest point carried over land to the Gulf of Akabah, where the ships were built. The only other interpretation of the statement in 2 Chronicles would be that Hiram sent ships from Tyre round Africa and then by the Indian Ocean into the Red Sea, which cannot for a moment be supposed.

27. *that had knowledge of the sea*] For which knowledge in ancient times the Phœnicians were the most famous people.

28. *they came to Ophir*] There is not sufficient evidence to decide where Ophir was. The most probable conjectures have been Africa, India and Arabia. But on account of the productions named in connexion with the place in chap. x. 11 Africa has been almost universally given up. And in the decision between India and Arabia, the latter seems the more likely, partly because it is nearer to reach from Ezion-geber, which is a consideration not without weight in questions connected with early navigation, and partly because the first mention of Ophir (Gen. x. 29) makes it refer to the descendants of Joktan, whose home was in Arabia. There is no necessity to conclude that the commodities brought from Ophir, gold, almug-trees and precious stones, were products of the land. Almug-wood has been supposed to be the same with sandal-wood, but the evidence on this point seems very inconclusive, and if it were proved, it might well be that the wood, produced in India, was brought to some mart on the Arabian coast for sale. The ports of Yemen and the Persian Gulf were great entrepots of commerce from the earliest times. With precious stones also this could easily be done, and with gold too. But the gold of Sheba (i.e. Arabia) is noted as famous in Ps. lxxii. 15; Isa. lx. 6. There appears therefore to be more in favour of some place on the coast of Arabia than for any other suggested site of Ophir. Josephus how-

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gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought *it* to king Solomon.

And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of 10
Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem 2

ever says it was in India (*Ant.* VIII. 6. 4), and that a more modern name is Χρυσῆ γῆ.

four hundred and twenty talents] The sum seems enormous, £2,250,000. What could a country like Palestine furnish in exchange? Perhaps the sum represents the total of many expeditions. The parallel passage in 2 Chron. (viii. 18) says 'four hundred and fifty talents,' Josephus 'about four hundred.' The LXX. (*Vat.*) gives 'one hundred and twenty talents.' The expedition appears to have been all for Solomon's benefit, as we hear nothing of any share of the adventure given to the Tyrian king.

CH. X. 1—13. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT TO KING SOLOMON. (2 Chron. ix. 1—12.)

1. *Now when the queen of Sheba heard*] The 'Sheba', of which the queen is here mentioned, was that part of Arabia spoken of in the note on the last verse of the preceding chapter. It embraced the greater part of Arabia Felix. Josephus and many Jewish writers represent her as the queen of Egypt and Ethiopia, making שבא (*Sheba*) the same as סבא (*Seba*), and this tradition is firmly rooted among the Abyssinians (i.e. Ethiopians), but there is no ground at all for identifying Sheba with the Ethiopian kingdom of Seba. Moreover the presents which the queen brought with her bespeak the land from which she came. They are Arabian, certainly not African.

concerning the name of the Lord] From the expressions so frequent in chap. viii. about 'a house built for *the name* of the Lord God of Israel' (see verses 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 35, 43, 44, 48) we may be sure that wherever the grand building was mentioned, there would be heard something about the name of Him to whose honour it was built. In like manner, at an earlier date, the people of Israel were known among other nations 'because of the name of the Lord.' See Josh. ix. 9, where the Gibeonites say 'we have heard the fame of Him, and all that He did in Egypt.' Through caravans travelling hither and thither there can be little doubt that knowledge of Solomon's works was widely spread, and communication with the Sabæans was a matter of no great difficulty. In the parallel passage (2 Chron. ix. 1) there is nothing said about 'the name of the Lord'; the LXX. has 'she had heard the name of Solomon *and* the name of the Lord.'

Some interpreters take the expression 'concerning the name of the Lord' to signify that the wisdom which Solomon had was derived from the Lord, and this made him famous. Some countenance is given to this opinion by the questions wherewith the queen essayed to test his wisdom, but it does not so well connect itself with 'the name.'

she came to prove him with hard questions] Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 6. 5)

with a very great train, *with* camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones: and when she was come to Solomon, she communed with him of all that was
3 in her heart. And Solomon told her all her questions: there was not *any* thing hid from the king, which he told
4 her not. And when the queen of Sheba had seen all
5 Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his

says 'she could not trust to hearsay, for the report might have been built upon false judgement, and might change, as it depended solely upon the persons who brought it.' The 'proving with hard questions' recalls the story of Samson's riddle (Judges xiv. 12). The giving of such riddles was not an uncommon pastime among the ancients, and we have specimens among the Greeks, who called them γρῖφοι. Cf. Aristoph. *Vesp.* 20, and especially Athenæus x. 69—78, where the author gives an account of the various kinds of riddles, and later in chap. 83 gives specimens of them. The Arabs were specially given to this kind of amusement, and we find in Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 5. 3) an account of a contest of wit of this nature between Hiram and Solomon, and he reports, on the authority of Dios, that a reason for Hiram's large payments to Solomon was that he had been beaten in the encounter and unable to solve the riddles propounded. The queen of Sheba came prepared with a series of such difficulties. Josephus says she came λῦσαι τὸ ἄπορον τῆς διανοίας δεηθεῖσα, which would indicate more than mere subtle questions among the inquiries which she made. It does not follow, however, that her difficulties were of a religious character, though this has been inferred from Matth. xii. 42.

2. *spices*] For which Arabia has always been famous.

3. *there was not* any *thing hid from the king, which he told her not*] i.e. Nothing was too deep for him in all she asked, he discovered the correct answer and gave it to her.

4. *the house that he had built*] This refers to his own palace, as is evident from the domestic details which immediately follow.

5. *the sitting of his servants*] Here 'servants' signifies the officers and distinguished persons who were privileged to sit at the king's table, and were ranged according to rank and in large numbers at the royal banquets.

the attendance of his ministers] This refers most probably to those persons who stood to serve the guests. The Hebrew word rendered 'attendance' is literally 'standing.' See A.V. marg.

and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord] This passage is rendered by the light of the parallel place in 2 Chron. ix. 4. There the word ועליתו does mean 'and his ascent', but here the text gives ועלתו, which should be rendered 'and his burnt offering.' So that the margin of the R.V. (which is also accepted by Luther, Coverdale

cupbearers, and his ascent *by* which he went up *unto* the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her. And 6
she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I 7
believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen *it:* and behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy 8
are thy men, happy *are* these thy servants, which stand con-

and the Geneva Bible) is correct for this verse, 'and his burnt offering which he offered in the house of the Lord.' If she had been present at a great sacrifice in the Temple it would doubtless have impressed her much. But it is possible that the scribe in one of these verses made a small error, and that they ought both to be the same. In that case we must decide whether it is more probable that after a list such as has gone before, about meat, servants, attendants, cupbearers, &c., there would follow some mention of a part of the building, a covered way or staircase by which the Temple could be reached from the king's palace, or a description of a solemn act of religious worship. Most people will be inclined to agree that the A.V. and R.V. have exercised a correct judgement in disregarding the text here, and interpreting by the light of the verse in 2 Chron. The R.V. has however added the rendering of the Massoretic text on the margin, which had not been done in A.V.

The LXX. here gives 'the burnt offering,' *τὴν ὁλοκαύτωσιν*, but its rendering in 2 Chron. ix. 4 is the same *τὰ ὁλοκαυτώματα*, where certainly the present Hebrew text should be translated 'his ascent.' Apparently the Greek translators regarded the verse before us as the true reading.

there was no more spirit in her] Apparently the queen had come with some hope that she might get the better of Solomon, either in her display of queenly splendour, or in the questions which she propounded. What she found was so far in excess of what she had expected, that all thought of comparison of herself with Solomon's state was gone, and she was lost in admiration. For the expression cf. Josh. v. 1.

6. *of thy acts*] The word may mean 'sayings,' as is represented on the margins of A. V. and R. V. But as she had seen all the king's state, as well as listened to his answers, it seems better to refer this word to the buildings and other splendour; for the admiration of the king's wisdom is expressed in the next words.

7. *thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame*] This is a good idiomatic representation of the Hebrew, which is literally 'thou hast added wisdom and goodness to the fame &c.' The 'goodness' here spoken of includes all material prosperity. Cf. Job ii. 10, where the same word stands in the original, 'Shall we receive *good* (i. e. such prosperity as Job had previously enjoyed) at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?' See also Ps. civ. 28.

8. *Happy are thy men*] The LXX. reads here *μακάριαι αἱ γυναῖκές*

9 tinually before thee, *and* that hear thy wisdom. Blessed be
the LORD thy God, which delighted in thee, to set thee on
the throne of Israel: because the LORD loved Israel for
ever, therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and
10 justice. And she gave the king an hundred and twenty
talents of gold, and of spices very great store, and precious
stones: there came no more such abundance of spices as
these which the queen of Sheba gave to king Solomon.
11 And the navy also of Hiram, that brought gold from Ophir,
brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug trees, and

σου, having read נשׁיך 'thy wives' instead of אנשׁיך 'thy men.' The Syriac and Arabic versions have the same variation.

9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God*] We need not suppose from the use of this language that the queen had become a convert to Judaism, any more than that Hiram was so from the words put into his mouth above in chap. v. 7. It could not matter, in the mind of the heathen queen, whether she included one divinity more or less in the number of those she honoured. To her, Jehovah was for Israel what her own divinity was for her own people, the national god to whom the prosperity of the king and his subjects had been a special care.

to set thee on the throne of Israel] In 2 Chron. ix. 8 the sentence runs 'to set thee on His throne, to be king for the Lord thy God.' This turn of the sentence harmonizes entirely with the tone of the Chronicler, who views everywhere the king as Jehovah's representative and vicegerent.

The LXX. expands the closing words of the verse, but not in such wise as to change the sense.

10. *And she gave the king an hundred and twenty talents of gold*] Large presents of this nature are still the rule among Oriental princes when they visit one another. Josephus however, contrary to his wont, has a less sum here, making the gift only 'twenty talents' (*Ant.* VIII. 6, 6). According to our text, the queen's present was the same as that which Hiram gave (see above ix. 14).

there came no more such abundance of spices] Josephus adds to this statement 'and they say that the root of the opobalsamum (i.e. the balsam tree), which our land still produces, came to us among her gifts.'

And the navy also of Hiram] This verse and the next are a parenthetic insertion, brought in by the mention of the spices in the previous verse. Hiram's fleet went to distant parts, and in the direction of Sheba, but for all that it brought back no such spicery among its imports. This navy is no doubt the same which was spoken of in the previous chapter (ix. 26—28). It is called Hiram's because he supplied the wood for building it, and the sailors for its manning.

great plenty of almug trees] The name is spelt in the text of Chronicles 'algum' (2 Chron. ii. 8, ix. 10, 11), and is probably a word

precious stones. And the king made *of* the almug trees 12
pillars for the house of the LORD, and for the king's house,
harps also and psalteries for singers: there came no such
almug trees, nor were seen unto this day. And king Solomon 13
gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, what*soever* she
asked, besides *that* which Solomon gave her of his royal

adopted from the language of the country where the wood was produced, and about the spelling of which Hebrew writers were not very sure, as Englishmen were not in former days about *tea*, which may be found spelt 'tcha.' What the wood was is a question of some difficulty. It was clearly an imported article, for what is said 2 Chron. ii. 8, 'Send me algum trees out of Lebanon,' must be understood not of trees growing there, but of wood which the Tyrians procured in their trade, and would send along with the timber which grew on Lebanon. The Rabbinical writers use *almug* for coral, and if this be an old Hebrew word, it may have been applied to these trees, because of the colour of their wood. But about the antiquity of the word we have no evidence. Most moderns incline to the opinion that sandal-wood is intended, though some, considering the words of 2 Chron. ii. 8 to imply a tree grown on Lebanon, prefer to regard it as a kind of cedar or cypress. Evidently the LXX. had no light on the subject, the renderings there given being πελεκητὰ (or ἀπελέκητα) and πεύκινα. The Vulgate renders it *thyina*, the wood of the θυία, which is akin to the *Arbor vitæ*. Some of the uses to which it was put, as mentioned in the next verse, seem to require a stouter material than sandal-wood.

Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 7, 1) calls the trees ξύλα πεύκινα, but says it was unlike the wood which went by the name of *pine* in his day. 'Let no one suppose,' he says, 'that this wood was like that called *pine wood* now, and which sellers call so for the bewilderment of buyers. The wood spoken of here resembles the wood of the fig tree, but is whiter and glitters more.'

12. *pillars for the house of the Lord*] The noun signifies 'a prop,' and it may be that some ornamental work like that indicated in the margin of the R. V. 'a railing' is intended. It was some later addition, not any part of the fabric, which was already completed. In the parallel place of 2 Chron. (ix. 11) there is a different word in the Hebrew, and one usually applied to a 'highway.' Both A. V. and R. V. have 'terraces' in that passage. If we combine the two narratives it may be that what is intended is a staircase with handrail and balustrade. The former word would suit in Chronicles, where A. V. has 'stairs' on the margin, and the latter here.

for singers] The word is definite, the singers. Cf. Eccl. ii. 8.

almug trees] Here the LXX. adds 'unto the land,' and the thought is perhaps of the things brought by the fleet of Hiram. In all their voyages they could not find the like.

13. *besides* that *which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty*] The Hebrew is literally 'beside that which he gave to her according to the

bounty. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

14 Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year
15 was six hundred threescore and six talents of gold, besides *that he had* of the merchantmen, and *of* the traffick of the *spice* merchants, and *of* all the kings of Arabia, and *of* the

hand of king Solomon.' For the phrase 'according to the hand' signifying 'after the liberality' compare Esther i. 7, ii. 18, where the same Hebrew is translated 'according to the state of the king,' i.e. 'according to his bounty' where the narrative relates to a magnificent feast, and presents given to the guests. In the parallel passage (2 Chron. ix. 12) we have 'beside that which she had brought unto the king,' which is very difficult to make any sense of.

14—29. SOLOMON'S REVENUE, HIS MAGNIFICENCE AND HIS TRAFFIC. (2 Chron. ix. 13—24.)

14. *six hundred threescore and six talents of gold*] Taking the gold shekel at the value of £2, and 3000 shekels in one talent, the sum here spoken of would amount to nearly four millions of our money, which for the time of Solomon appears a very enormous revenue, especially when there are additions to be made to it, such as those spoken of in verses 15, 22, and 25. There can be no doubt that Solomon was one of the wealthiest monarchs in the East at that date. But the taxation must have been crushing, and with all this Oriental splendour and luxury there was rottenness within. Solomon was the Jewish Louis XIV.

15. *beside* that he had *of the merchantmen*] There are two kinds of traders specified in this verse, and the participle here used to describe the first signifies 'those who go about' with their goods, hawkers of their wares, which is a general characteristic of Oriental traffickers. Hence in R. V. the word **chapmen** has been adopted, and the clause a little differently worded. Literally it is, 'beside (what came) from the men of the hawkers,' and this is represented by 'beside *that which* the chapmen *brought*,' though the literal rendering shews that 'brought' might fairly have been printed in Roman and not in italics. The LXX. gives, apparently having read some other words in the original, 'from the tribute of the subject people.'

and of *the traffick of the* spice *merchants*] A mistaken identification of the word descriptive of this second class of traders with a Syrian noun which means 'a dealer in aromatic herbs' has led to the rendering 'spice merchants.' The word merely implies another class of merchants, but whether more or less dignified than the former it is not easy to make out. The LXX. renders by ἔμπορος here and elsewhere, and gives here 'the taxes on the merchants'. Render (as there is no preposition with this clause) **and the traffick of the merchants.**

and of all the kings of Arabia] R.V. 'and of all the kings **of the mingled people.**' The word in the original, though it has the same

governors of the country. And king Solomon made two hundred targets *of* beaten gold: six hundred *shekels* of gold went to one target. And *he made* three hundred shields *of* beaten gold; three pound *of* gold went to one shield: and the king put them *in* the house of the forest of Lebanon. 16 17

consonants, has not the same vowels as the proper name. In this text we have הָעֲרָב, while the other word is עֲרַב =Arabia. That the two are distinct designations is proved by Jer. xxv. 24, where both occur in the same verse, 'all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the mingled people.' The word in our text is used very early in the history of Israel (Exod. xii. 38) of 'the mixed multitude' which came up with the Israelites out of Egypt, and afterwards of people who were in a sort of loose attachment to the kingdom. (Cf. Jer. l. 37.) In the parallel passage (2 Chron. ix. 14) the Hebrew text has the 'kings of Arabia,' but the form of the sentence is somewhat altered, and the close connexion of the two sets of persons in the verse already quoted from Jeremiah makes it not unlikely that both were under a sort of tribute to Solomon. The LXX. has *τῶν βασιλέων τοῦ πέραν*, but the Vulgate 'reges Arabiæ.'

and of *the governors of the country*] Most likely those officers are meant whose positions were described iv. 7—19. After the Oriental fashion such persons would pay for their posts by regular tribute to the king.

16. *two hundred targets* of *beaten gold*] The 'targets' here spoken of appear, from the gold consumed in them, to have been much larger than the 'shields' mentioned in the next verse. Both the names imply 'protection,' 'covering,' but give us no clue to their form. The LXX. makes these 'targets' three hundred in number, and gives three hundred shekels of gold to each.

six hundred shekels *of gold*] It was not unusual in Hebrew where it was well known what word ought to be supplied to omit the word 'shekels' as is done here. So Gen. xxiv. 22; Exod. xxx. 23. No Englishman misunderstands such an expression as 'three hundred a year.'

17. *three pound* of *gold went to one shield*] The word rendered pound here is 'maneh,' and according to the parallel passage (2 Chron. ix. 16) is equal to 'one hundred shekels.' There is no sufficient data for settling the value of these weights in terms of our English standards, but such computations as seem most trustworthy make the *maneh* equal to about 2½ lbs. The addition of three such maneh of gold to a shield need not make it unwieldy. Of course the gold was only the external covering, not the whole fabric of the shields, though Josephus says the king *cast* (*ἐχώνευσε*) these targets and shields of the precious metal.

in *the house of the forest of Lebanon*] On this see above vii. 2. These golden shields were probably only used on grand occasions, and when not in use were suspended against the numerous pillars in the royal armoury, for which purpose the house of the forest of Lebanon

18 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and over-
19 laid it with the best gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round behind: and *there were* stays on either side on the place of the seat, and two lions
20 stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was
21 not the like made in any kingdom. And all king Solomon's drinking vessels *were of* gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon *were of* pure gold: none *were of* silver: it was nothing accounted of in the days of
22 Solomon. For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish

appears to have been built. The shields were carried away in the succeeding reign by Shishak king of Egypt (xiv. 26) and brazen ones were made by Rehoboam to be put in their place.

18. *a great throne of ivory*] Like Ahab's ivory house, mentioned later on (xxii. 39), the throne was no doubt only inlaid with ivory, in such a way that where the gold did not cover the framework there the ivory appeared. And we may suppose that the ivory was a very conspicuous part of the structure, or else the throne would not be called from it.

with the best gold] R.V. '**finest** gold.' The Hebrew participle (which occurs in no other place) is from a root which signifies 'to refine,' 'to purge.' Hence the rendering of R.V. is preferable. The Hebrew word is 'muphaz,' and the excessive rarity of its occurrence has led some to conjecture that the reading here ought to be as in Jer. x. 9 'ma-uphaz,' i.e. 'from Uphaz.' Uphaz is thought to be a later form of the word Ophir. It is found also in Dan. x. 5. But though the participle in the text is rare, there is a cognate word of frequent occurrence, meaning 'fine gold,' so that we need not doubt about the sense in this passage.

19. *And the top of the throne* was *round behind*] The word 'top' is literally 'head,' and points to some erection in the nature of a canopy or baldachino. The roundness here spoken of might either be from the sides of the back being curved inward as they rose up, or from the canopy being arched from behind. This portion of the description is omitted in 2 Chron. ix. 18, but there is added, what we have not here, that 'a footstool of gold' was joined to the throne. Josephus omits all mention of the throne, and the LXX. has προτομαὶ μόσχων, i.e. 'heads (projections) of calves,' having taken עָגֹל='round' as if it were עֵגֶל 'a calf.'

21. *all king Solomon's drinking vessels*] The LXX. here leaves out the defining word, merely putting σκεύη=vessels, but adds afterwards, what has nothing to represent it in our Hebrew, καὶ λουτῆρες χρυσοῖ, 'and golden lavers.'

22. *For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish*] i.e. Of ships such

with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the 23
earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought 24
to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of 25

as were used in the trade with Tarshish (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 48). These would probably be of the largest build then possible. Tarshish is most likely Tartessus in the south of Spain, with which place the Tyrians had considerable trade, and it is not difficult to understand how such a class of traffic would give a name to the vessels that bore it, just as we say now 'an East Indiaman.' Josephus explains the name by saying they were ships which plied ἐν τῇ Ταρσικῇ λεγομένῃ θαλάττῃ 'in the Tarsic sea as it is called.' But it is clear that the articles brought in Solomon's fleet could not be found in the country about Tartessus, except perhaps some gold. It is better therefore to understand the name as derived from the character of the craft rather than from the place to which they sailed.

once in three years came the navy] The voyage here alluded to was most likely the voyage to Ophir mentioned in ix. 28. The time consumed between voyage and voyage would be partly spent in loading and unloading, and in traffic at the various marts at which the fleet touched. Josephus explains that the things brought were procured by barter, though neither he nor the text tells us what was taken in the fleet when the voyage commenced.

ivory, and apes, and peacocks] The words used for the two first of these are most likely of Sanskrit origin, the second entirely, the first in part; and as peacocks are natives of India these names point to India as the source from which Solomon's imports were drawn. Whether the ships visited India or collected their cargoes on the coasts of Arabia and in the Persian Gulf it is not easy to decide. The time occupied is enough for even a ship of that period to have coasted round India.

In the LXX. after verse 22 is inserted great part of the substance of that long omission noticed above from verse 15—25, in chapter ix.; though there is no mention made of Pharaoh's expedition against Gezer, nor of the daughter of Pharaoh coming out of Zion to dwell in the house built for her, nor of Solomon's sacrifices thrice in the year.

24. *And all the earth sought to Solomon*] In 2 Chron. ix. 23 the words are 'and all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon,' and, as the Hebrew of the last words is the same as here, the fuller form will be better in this verse as it comes more close to the original. The LXX., the Syriac and Arabic, have 'all the kings of the earth.'

25. *they brought every man his present*] After the fashion in royal visits, but the close of the verse indicates that these gifts were from tributaries and came in at fixed times.

silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and
26 spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year. And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and
27 with the king at Jerusalem. And the king made silver *to be* in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he *to be* as the
28 sycomore trees that *are* in the vale, for abundance. And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt, and linen yarn:

vessels of silver] These do not appear in the LXX., which also omits any notice of 'armour,' and for 'spices' gives σακτὴ καὶ ἡδύσματα.

garments] Changes of raiment formed a very common gift in the East, and were highly valued. Josephus describes those given to Solomon as ἀλουργεῖς ἐσθῆτες, 'purple-dyed garments,' perhaps because Tyre was famous for such dyeing.

26. *And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen*] By reason, as Josephus tells us, of the great number of horses which were brought to him in these yearly offerings. The word פָּרָשׁ (*parash*) here rendered 'horsemen' means both the horse for riding and the rider. Just as we speak of so many hundred 'horse'. סוּס (*sus*) on the other hand was the draught horse.

Here we find the first institution of cavalry in Israel in defiance of the Deuteronomic law. If this book was compiled after Deuteronomy was written we should expect some reference to this violation. There is such a reference about another matter in xi. 2.

a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen] The LXX. gives for the first clause 'four thousand mares for his chariots,' which agrees as far as the number is concerned with 2 Chron. ix. 25, 'four thousand stalls for horses and chariots': though in 2 Chron. i. 14 we have precisely the same number both of chariots and horsemen specified as is given here.

at Jerusalem] After this the LXX. adds 'and he was chief over all the kings from the River even unto the land of the Philistines and to the borders of Egypt.'

27. *silver*] Here the LXX. has 'gold and silver,' and so too in the parallel passage 2 Chron. ix. 27, and where the passage is inserted 2 Chron. i. 15 the LXX. reads τὸ ἀργύριον καὶ τὸ χρυσίον.

in the vale] The word (*Shefelah*) here rendered 'vale' is the name of that low-lying part of Palestine which stretches westward from the mountains of Judah to the Mediterranean (cf. Josh. ix. 1, xii. 8). The R.V. has always distinguished this as **the lowland**. It was a district fertile and specially well-wooded. The Hebrew word though at first only descriptive, became at last a proper name 'Sephela.' See 1 Macc. xii. 38.

28. *And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt*] The first clause of the verse ends here according to the Hebrew punctuation, and this appears to be a general statement, of which the particulars are given in what follows. But the literal rendering is 'and the export of horses

the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price.
And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six 29
hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for an hundred and
fifty: and so for all the kings of the Hittites, and for the
kings of Syria, did they bring *them* out by their means.

which was to Solomon (was) from Egypt;' and this the R.V. represents by **And the horses which Solomon had were brought out of Egypt.**

and linen yarn] The word (מִקְוֶה) *mikveh* so translated, is derived from a verb which implies 'a stringing together,' and a kindred noun (תִּקְוָה) *tikvah*, is used (Josh. ii. 18) for the *line* of scarlet cord which Rahab was ordered to bind in her window. From this connexion the rendering of the A.V. is derived. But the word in the text is used for gathering together in other senses, and here seems to be intended for 'a *string* of horses,' which sense the R.V. has represented by 'a drove.' The word occurs twice over and must have the same sense in both places of the same verse. The whole is rendered in R.V. **and the king's merchants received them in droves, each drove at a price.** The Hebrew pointing represents the word מִקְוֶה in a form which may be considered in construction, though it need not necessarily be so. Hence some have given a double meaning to the word, referring it in the first place to the caravan of merchants, and only in the second place to the string of horses. The rendering then would be 'And a company of the king's merchants received a (each) drove of horses at a price.' But it appears harsh to give two senses to the same word in the same verse.

What appears to be meant is that the king's representatives dealt wholesale with the Egyptian breeders, contracting to take so many horses for a stipulated sum; afterwards they brought the droves away, and disposed of them, as retailers, and hence secured for king Solomon a considerable revenue by the profits.

The Vulgate takes the word 'Mikveh' 'a drove' as being a proper name preceded by a preposition, and renders 'and from Coa.' The LXX. has done something of the same kind, but has taken the word as 'Tekoa' *καὶ ἐκ Θεκουέ*.

29. *And a chariot*] The word is used (Exod. xiv. 25; Josh. xi. 6, 9, &c.) for a 'chariot employed in war,' and that is probably the sense here. These also Solomon's merchants supplied from Egypt, and in this verse we have the notice of their retail trade. It may be that these traders did not pay to the king according to their profits, but paid him a duty for the privilege of trading; but this does not appear.

The Hebrew word for 'shekels' is omitted here as in verse 16 above. See note there.

for all the kings of the Hittites] The Hittites were divided into numerous small kingdoms, situated in the country between the Euphrates on one side and Hamath and Damascus on the other. Their two chief cities were Carchemish and Kadesh. In the early times some Hittite settlements were made in southern Palestine, and we read of these people in the days of the patriarchs (Gen. xxvi. 34, &c.).

and for the kings of Syria] Syria (*Heb.* Aram) is the name given in

11 But king Solomon loved many strange women, together
with the daughter of Pharaoh, *women of the* Moabites, Am-
2 monites, Edomites, Zidonians, *and* Hittites; of the nations
concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel,
Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto

the Old Test. to all the country north-east of Phœnicia and extending beyond the Euphrates and Tigris. Sometimes the term includes the Hittite country. Mesopotamia is distinguished (Gen. xxiv. 10; Deut. xxiii. 5, &c.) as *Aram-Naharaim* (i.e. Syria of the two rivers), and is sometimes called Padan-Aram (Gen. xxv. 20). Other portions were known by distinctive names, as *Aram-Maachah* (1 Chron. xix. 6), *Aram-beth-Rehob* (2 Sam. x. 6), *Aram-Zobah* (2 Sam. x. 6, 8). It was for the princes of these districts that Solomon's merchants brought up horses and chariots from Egypt. All these small kingdoms became afterwards subject to Damascus.

by their means] Literally 'in their hand.' That is, these merchants were the agents through whom the various princes obtained their supplies. In 2 Chron. ix. 28 it is not only from Egypt, but from all lands, that horses for Solomon's trade were brought, but 2 Chron. i. 16, 17 is word for word the same as the account in this chapter.

CHAP. XI. 1—8. STRANGE WIVES TURN AWAY SOLOMON'S HEART. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Solomon loved many strange women*] Where polygamy was common there would be a great temptation to a powerful king to connect himself by marriage with all the nations about him. At the same time a large harem was an element in Oriental pomp. Most of these women were heathen, and their worship would be practised in the harem. In all the nations of antiquity women had special religious observances which they practised without the assistance of the priests. But Solomon built temples for foreign worship. It seems from verse 8 that these were for the women. If this were so they must have come, under attendance no doubt, from the harem to the Temple. In taking Pharaoh's daughter Solomon had joined to him a mighty but somewhat distant monarch. The other nations mentioned in this verse were close at hand. Edom bordered on the south of Palestine, Moab and Ammon were on the east, and Sidon and the Hittite kingdom on the north. The LXX. (*Vat.*) adds Syrian and Amorite wives to the number, and incorporates part of verse 3 with this verse.

Of this part of Solomon's conduct and character no mention is made in the books of the Chronicles.

2. *of the nations* concerning *which the Lord said*] The prohibition of intermarriage with the nations of Canaan is given in Exodus xxxiv. 16; Deut. vii. 3, 4. Like so much else in the Law, it was a great ideal toward which neither the people nor their rulers were earnest in advancing, when they once became settled in some portion of the land.

you: *for* surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven 3
hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines:
and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, 4
when Solomon was old, *that* his wives turned away his heart
after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the
LORD his God, as *was* the heart of David his father. For 5
Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,

3. *seven hundred wives, princesses*] The numbers in this verse are far in excess of those in the Song of Solomon, which makes mention (vi. 8) of threescore queens. But from the instances known of other monarchs there is little reason to question what is stated in this verse. Philippson (*die Israelitische Bibel*) tells of the wives of the great Mogul as 1000 in number, and in ancient history there are similar examples. Many of these were probably never seen by the monarch in his life, but counted among his household, as an item of magnificence. It was only by the few who were his more constant companions that Solomon's heart was turned away.

4. *when Solomon was old*] At least half of the king's reign was over before the Temple and the king's house and the other buildings were completed. It was therefore in the latter half of his reign, and probably towards the close of that, when the influence of his wives gained undue sway over him.

perfect with the Lord] i. e. Completely devoted to His service, see note on viii. 61. Solomon has described the state in his prayer (viii. 61) 'to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments.' The language of the verse indicates, not that Solomon forsook for himself the worship of Jehovah, but that he was less earnest about it, and allowed side by side with it the temples of heathen gods to be erected, and their worship to be something more than tolerated, even perhaps abundantly supported from his means. As it is said below in verse 6, 'he went not fully after the Lord.'

5. *Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians*] Ashtoreth was the chief female divinity of the Phœnicians, as Baal was their chief male deity. As Baal has been identified with the sun, so Ashtoreth has by some been thought to be the moon. Recent investigations have however connected the name of Ashtoreth with the planet Venus, and by some it is thought that the name was applied in some parts of the Phœnician settlements to Venus, in others to the moon. Ashtoreth is identified with the Greek Ἀστάρτη, and the name of an ancient city (Gen. xiv. 5) *Ashteroth-Karnaim*, i.e. Ashteroth of the two horns, seems to point to the crescent moon. This is accepted by Milton (*Par. L.* I. 438).

> 'Ashtoreth, whom the Phœnicians called
> Astartè, queen of heaven, with crescent horns
> To whose bright image, nightly by the moon
> Sidonian virgins paid their vows and songs.'

6 after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and went not
7 fully after the LORD, as *did* David his father. Then did Solomon build a high place for Chemosh, the abomination

The worship of Ashtoreth was very widespread, as might be expected from the wide commercial relations, and distant colonies, of the Phœnicians. Why Ashtoreth is here named 'goddess' while the other deities are called 'abominations' may be due to the greater intercourse between Sidon and the Holy Land than existed with other countries. The Phœnician workmen at the Temple had perhaps caused the Israelites to become more accustomed to the name and worship of Ashtoreth.

Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites] This is the same divinity who is called below (verse 7) Molech, and in Zeph. i. 5 Malcham. Molech was a fire god, and was worshipped with human sacrifices. The root of the word is the same as that of the Hebrew word for 'king.' Hence some think 'their king' in 2 Sam. xii. 30 means Molech, the god of the Ammonites. There are numerous allusions in the Old Test. to the worship of this god, the phrase most common being 'to make their children to pass through the fire to Molech.' See 2 Kings xxiii. 10, 13. Some have explained this not as actual burning of the children to death, but as a passing of them between two fires for an ordeal of purification. But in 2 Chron. xxviii. 3 it is said of Ahaz, 'He burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and *burnt* his children in the fire, after the abominations of the nations whom Jehovah had driven out.' And the actual burning of the children thus offered is alluded to very plainly in Jer. vii. 31, 'They have built the high places of Tophet, ...*to burn* their sons and their daughters in the fire.' The tradition is that the statue of Molech was of brass and the hands so arranged that the victim slipped from them into a fire which burnt underneath. It may be because there were no such sacrifices offered to Ashtoreth, that she is not spoken of as 'an abomination.'

7. *a high place*] That 'high places' were not abolished in Solomon's time we can see from iii. 2, 3, where see notes. The idea was that on a lofty height the worshipper drew nearer to his god, and so was able to offer a more acceptable sacrifice. Hence the erection of altars on the tops of hills, and these were frequently accompanied with some house or shrine for the image of the god, and hence we read of the 'houses of the high places.' Cf. 1 Kings xii. 31, xiii. 32; 2 Kings xvii. 29, 32, xxiii. 19. This form of worshipping was so firmly rooted among the Israelites that we read of it constantly down to the reign of Josiah, by whom at length it appears to have been put down (2 Kings xxiii. 19).

for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab] Chemosh, though generally called the national god of the Moabites, is said (Judges xi. 24) to have been also the god of the Ammonites. He is first mentioned in Numb. xxi. 29. The worship now introduced into Jerusalem by Solomon was put down by Josiah (2 Kings xxiii. 13). There is nothing in any of the Biblical notices to guide us to an opinion either about the

of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise 8
did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods.

meaning of the name or the nature of the worship offered to Chemosh. An ancient Jewish tradition relates that Chemosh was worshipped under the form of a black star, hence some have identified him with Saturn. But this is no more than conjecture. Milton alludes to the identification of Chemosh with Baal-peor:

> 'Peor his other name, when he enticed
> Israel in Sittim on their march from Nile.'
>
> *Par. L.* I. 412.

in the hill that is *before Jerusalem*] The hill facing Jerusalem is the mount of Olives. It is described in Ezek. xi. 23 as 'the mountain which is on the east side of the city,' and in Zech. xiv. 4 as 'the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.' The LXX. (*Vat.*) has omitted any mention of 'the hill before Jerusalem.' Milton alludes to the position of these idolatrous erections:

> 'the wisest heart
> Of Solomon he led by fraud to build
> His temple right against the temple of God
> On that opprobrious hill.'
>
> *Par. L.* I. 400.

The last words allude to a name given to this height in consequence of these buildings, 'Mons offensionis.' This name is said (*Dictionary of Bible*, II. 627) to be of late origin. But the words occur in the Vulgate (2 Kings xxiii. 13) 'ad dexteram partem montis offensionis.'

and for Molech] See above on *Milcom* in verse 5. The LXX. translates the proper name, and reads καὶ τῷ βασιλεῖ. Milton also reminds us that the word could be translated:

> 'First Moloch, horrid *king*, besmeared with blood
> Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears
> Though for the noise of drums and timbrels loud
> Their children's cries unheard.'

The allusion in the last words is to the name 'Tophet,' as the valley of the son of Hinnom was called where the Moloch-worship went on. This was thought by some to be derived from the Hebrew word תֹּף (*toph*) a timbrel. Hence the tradition of drums beaten to drown the cries of the suffering children. There is no warrant for the derivation, nor probably for the tradition. On the whole subject, see Selden, *de Dis Syris*, p. 172.

8. *and likewise did he for all his strange wives*] i.e. For such of them as desired a special place for their worship. Ashtoreth, Chemosh and Moloch would suffice for the greater number, but we know of other gods among the nations round about, and the text implies that all were equally regarded. In the LXX. (*Vat.*) the order of these eight verses is

9 And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart
was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had ap-
10 peared unto him twice, and had commanded him concerning
this thing, that *he* should not go after other gods: but
11 he kept not *that* which the LORD commanded. Wherefore
the LORD said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of
thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes,
which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the king-
12 dom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwith-
standing in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's
13 sake: *but* I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. How-

considerably varied from the Hebrew text, and the narrative commences somewhat differently, thus: 'And king Solomon was a lover of women, and he had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines.'

9—13. ANGER OF THE LORD AT THESE OFFENCES. (Not in Chronicles.)

9. *which had appeared unto him twice*] See iii. 5 for the first appearance of the Lord in Gibeon; and (ix. 2) for the second when the Temple and the king's house were finished.

10. *and had commanded him concerning this thing*] The command is recorded in substance in vi. 12 and ix. 6. No allusion is made in either place to the sort of temptation which led Solomon into this sin.

but he kept not that *which the Lord commanded*] Instead of these words the LXX. gives 'and his heart was not perfect with the Lord, as the heart of David his father': a repetition of a part of verse 4.

11. *the Lord said unto Solomon*] The message was perhaps by the mouth of one of the Prophets. The visions vouchsafed to Solomon had been in the time of his obedience.

Forasmuch as this is done of thee] Literally 'this is with thee.' This is not an unusual form of expression for the plan or course of action which any one has adopted. Cf. Job x. 13, 'And these things hast thou hid in thine heart, I know that *this is with thee*.' See also Job ix. 35 and margin of A.V.

I will surely rend] The same verb is used of the symbolical action of Ahijah (see below, verse 30), by which this tearing away of the greater part of the kingdom was typified.

to thy servant] For the position occupied by Jeroboam, see below, verse 28.

12. *in thy days I will not do it*] For a similar postponement of God's penalty, cf. the history of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 29).

for David thy father's sake] An example of God's mercy shewn towards the descendants of them that love Him, as promised in the second commandment (Exod. xx. 6), and typifying that fuller mercy which was to be shewn for the sake of the obedience of Christ.

beit I will not rend away all the kingdom; *but* will give one tribe to thy son for David my servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen.

And the LORD stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, 14
Hadad the Edomite: he *was* of the king's seed in Edom.
For it came to pass, when David was in Edom, and Joab 15

13. but *will give one tribe*] The reference is to the tribe of Judah from which the southern kingdom took its name. Benjamin which went with Judah was so small as to be hardly worth accounting of, and Simeon was also absorbed in Judah. The same form of words is used below (verse 32) in the account of Ahijah's action, though it is expressly said in a previous verse 'Take thee ten pieces.' One reason for the close union of Benjamin with Judah was that the territorial division between the two tribes was such as to make the Temple the common property of both. The city of the Jebusite, which David conquered, and all the ground north of the valley of Hinnom was in the tribe of Benjamin.

for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen] In Deut. xii. 5 it is signified that God will choose some place out of all the tribes 'to place His name there,' and in 1 Kings xiv. 21 Jerusalem is expressly called 'the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there.' Hence the place was an object of Jehovah's unchanging regard.

14—22. HADAD THE EDOMITE RAISED UP AS AN ADVERSARY TO SOLOMON. (Not in Chronicles.)

14. *And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon*] In David's time Edom had been reduced, but in the later days of Solomon, when his heart was turned away, an opportunity is offered for the representative of Edom to seek to recover his kingdom. This was not unnatural, for the conduct of Solomon may be presumed to have estranged some of his own subjects. The writer, regarding Jehovah as ruler of the world, speaks of this occurrence as brought about by Him. He raised up the adversary. The Hebrew word for 'adversary' is here 'Satan,' which the LXX. merely transliterates καὶ ἤγειρε κύριος Σατὰν τῷ Σαλωμών.

Hadad the Edomite] Hadad was apparently a common name among the Edomite royal family. We find it (Gen. xxxvi. 36) among the list of early Edomite kings, and three verses later, *Hadar*, is probably (cf. 1 Chron. i. 50) a mistake of the scribe for Hadad.

he was *of the king's seed*] And, from his action, apparently the heir to the throne. This perhaps accounts for the friendly reception which he found in Egypt. His father had most likely been slain when David attacked Edom.

The LXX. (*Vat.*) inserts in this verse a notice of Rezon, spoken of in verses 23—25 below. The name is given as Ἐσρὼμ, and the notice is more brief than in the Hebrew text, and verses 23—25 are omitted from the LXX. in consequence.

15. *when David was in Edom*] The time alluded to is the period

the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after
16 he had smitten every male in Edom; (for six months did
Joab remain there with all Israel, until he had cut off every
17 male in Edom:) that Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites
of his father's servants with him, to go *into* Egypt; Hadad
18 *being yet* a little child. And they arose out of Midian, and

of David's conquests (2 Sam. viii. 14), when it is said that all Edom became his servants. The LXX. says 'when David destroyed Edom,' which was perhaps the fact, as this verse shews, but is not stated in the earlier history. He conquered the land, and put garrisons of his own men throughout it.

and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain] On Joab, see i. 7. The slain were the Israelites who had fallen in David's war with Edom. To bury these the captain of the host was appointed, and he abode after that work was over, till all were cut off, or driven away, from whom there could be any fear of resistance.

after he had smitten every male in Edom] This can only mean, as just stated, those persons who were likely to rebel against Israel. The narrative in 2 Sam. viii. 14 implies that those who submitted were left, and put under tribute to Israel.

16. *for six months*] Not too long a time to be spent in establishing garrisons which might hold the land.

with all Israel] This like the last verse must be understood only of such forces as were engaged in this war. David with a sufficient body-guard would retire northward, through a country all his own, and where no greater force was needed, leaving Joab and the bulk of the host to complete the arrangements for the holding of Edom.

17. *Hadad fled*] Here the Hebrew text by an error of the scribe gives *Adad* as the name. Or is it because the aspirate gave people trouble then as now?

his father's servants] This seems conclusive that Hadad's father had been king of Edom. The LXX. says *all* his father's servants escaped with him.

to go into *Egypt*] In David's days, Egypt was not, as it became in the reign of Solomon, closely bound up with the interests of Israel. Hence the defeated Edomites could look for a refuge there.

Hadad being yet *a little child*] Solomon uses the same expression of himself in iii. 7. It implies youth, but not necessarily infancy.

18. *And they arose out of Midian*] It is not easy to decide what place or district is meant by Midian. The country so called in the time of Moses (Exod. ii. 15, iii. 1) could not have been far away from Mt. Sinai, and the fugitives from Edom would hardly have made their way to such a distance before setting out on their journey to Egypt. If the Midianites wandered about in the desert it may be that there was some more northern district nearer to the south-west of Edom which was called after them. Of this however we have no information.

The LXX. here reads ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Μαδιάμ, thus explaining the word

came *to* Paran: and they took men with them out of Paran, and they came *to* Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt; which gave him a house, and appointed him victuals, and gave him land. And Hadad found great favour in the sight 19
of Pharaoh, so that he gave him *to* wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen. And the sister of 20
Tahpenes bare him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house: and Genubath was *in* Pharaoh's

as the name of a city. There is however a difference of reading in Judges x. 12 which may help us. There we read 'The Zidonians and Amalek and Maon did oppress you...and I delivered you out of their hand.' Now instead of Maon the LXX. in that passage gives *Madiam*. The two words appear in Hebrew as מעון and מדין respectively, very closely resembling each other. But in the book of Judges 'Maon' is not mentioned among the enemies of Israel, but the Midianites play a conspicuous part. It seems likely therefore that the LXX. is correct and that in Judges x. 12 'Midian' should be read instead of 'Maon'.

In the present verse it would almost seem as if the contrary change should be made. We read of Maon among the cities on the south of Judah, and not far from Paran, in the story of Nabal (1 Sam. xxv. 2). There we read that David could send men from the wilderness of Paran up to Maon, and when they came back rudely repulsed could set forth himself to chastise Nabal. If we suppose these fugitive Edomites to have taken refuge for a brief time in the mountainous district of south Judah, where Maon was, the rest of their proceedings becomes explicable. They came from Maon to the wilderness of Paran, found some men there, either fellow fugitives or others, whom they took as guides and a convoy and thus made their way to Egypt.

Paran] By this name seems to be meant that wilderness which beginning on the south of Judah and south-west of Edom is now known as El-Tih, and which was the scene of the wanderings of the Israelites.

unto Pharaoh king of Egypt] This king may have been the immediate predecessor of the monarch whose daughter Solomon married. There need not have been more than 30 years, if so much, between these events in David's life, and the marriage of Solomon.

victuals] Heb. 'bread,' i. e. a regular sustenance for himself and those he had brought with him. In the same way 'land' implies a place in which they all might settle and live during their stay.

19. *the queen*] The Hebrew word גבירה (*g'birah*) is not the usual word for 'queen,' but a title of special honour, used occasionally (1 Kings xv. 13; 2 Chron. xv. 16) for the 'queen-mother,' always a person of great influence in an Oriental court.

20. *weaned*] The weaning of a child was a great event in Eastern families, and an occasion of much rejoicing. Abraham made a feast (Gen. xxi. 8) the same day that Isaac was weaned. This may account for the part taken by the queen in this event.

household among the sons of Pharaoh. And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what *hast* thou lacked with me, that behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing: howbeit let me go in any wise. And God stirred him up *another* adversary, Rezon the

21. *when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers*] Hadad's first attempt to depart from Egypt was therefore soon after Solomon's accession. It is clear however from the history that it was only after some pressure that the Egyptian king allowed him to go. The mischief that he did (see verse 25) would be by stirring up his countrymen to cast off the yoke of the Israelites. We must allow a considerable time for any revolt to be organized, and we are not told that any outbreak really took place, but only that mischief was done through Hadad's agitation.

and that Joab the captain of the host was dead] Joab's name would be one to spread terror, because of the severity he had displayed toward Edom. (See above, verses 15, 16.) Hadad therefore waited to hear of his death also, before he ventured to take any step for his own restoration.

22. *And he answered, Nothing*] The Hebrew has for the last word only the simple negative 'Not.' (See A.V. marg.) The verb 'I have lacked' is to be supplied.

let me go in any wise] The verb is not the same as that translated 'go' in the former part of the verse. The R.V. marks the difference by rendering **depart** here, as the word corresponds to that so translated in 21.

Here the LXX. (*Vat.*) has in addition 'And Hadad (Ἀδερ) returned to his own land. This is the evil which Hadad did: and he was indignant against Israel, and reigned in the land of Edom.' Then verses 23—25 are omitted, having been partly represented by the additions to verse 14 noticed above.

23—25. ANOTHER ADVERSARY RAISED UP AGAINST SOLOMON. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *And God stirred him up* another *adversary*] R.V. **raised up**, as in verse 14. There it is said 'the Lord (i.e. Jehovah)' raised up the adversary; here it is 'God (Elohim)' who does it. There are some who see in this variation an indication of two different sources for the text, the earlier using 'Elohim,' the later 'Jehovah.' Such an interchange might well be found in a text written even in the days of Solomon, much more so, at the date when this narrative was set down, and is much too slender a thread of evidence to hang so serious a judgement upon.

Rezon the son of Eliadah] The latter name should be written **Eliada**

son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah: and he gathered men unto him, and became captain 24 over a band, when David slew them *of Zobah:* and they went *to* Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in

(as R.V.). There is nothing more known with certainty about this Rezon. The events to which allusion is made in this verse are related 2 Sam. viii. 3—8. There Hadadezer is called 'the son of Rehob.' He was thoroughly defeated by David, who thereupon put garrisons in Syria of Damascus. It cannot therefore have been immediately after the overthrow of Hadadezer that Rezon and his party established themselves in Damascus. For a time, at all events (2 Sam. viii. 6), 'the Syrians became servants to David and brought gifts.' Rezon most likely escaped when his master was defeated, and waited till a convenient opportunity offered, and then tried, as here narrated, to establish himself as king over Syria. Henceforth for centuries Syria was the determined foe of Israel. In a later chapter (1 Kings xv. 18) Benhadad, a subsequent king of Syria, in Asa's time, is described as a grandson of Hezion. The name Hezion חזיון is not very unlike Rezon רזון in the characters of the original. Hence some have conjectured that they are the same person. But there seems no sufficient foundation for the opinion.

fled from his lord] This flight may have taken place before David's attack on Hadadezer, though what has been said in the previous note seems more probable.

king of Zobah] This kingdom is mentioned in the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon, but then is heard of no more. It comprised the country east of Cœle-Syria, and extended northward and eastward towards the Euphrates. See 1 Sam. xiv. 47; 2 Sam. viii. 3, xxiii. 36; 1 Chron. xviii. 3, xix. 6; 2 Chron. viii. 3.

24. *and he gathered men unto him*] The LXX. (*Alex.*) says 'men were gathered unto him.' This only indicates different vowel points to the same consonants. But the difference in the sense would point to Rezon as one whom his countrymen regarded as a leader.

and became captain over a band] (R. V. troop). The word is mostly used of martial gatherings, and organized forces, and this is the sense here. Rezon gathered, and trained his followers till they were able to dislodge the troops of Israel and establish themselves in Damascus.

when David slew them of Zobah] The two last words are necessary to complete the sense. It is clear that others beside Rezon fled away. It may have been that Hadadezer was an unpopular king. Out of the fugitives Rezon formed for himself a troop, and awaiting his time, came back and assumed the sovereignty.

and they went to *Damascus*] i.e. When an opportunity came about of entering into a city, they left what must before have been a wandering life of guerilla-warfare, and settled within walls.

and dwelt therein] Making a permanent settlement, and may have continued some time before Rezon was made king.

25 Damascus. And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad *did:* and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

26 And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda,

and reigned in Damascus] If this verb be correct, the sense is that this band of warriors seized the city, and made themselves in a body lords of the place and its people. But a very slight variation of the text would give the sense 'they made them a king in D.' which, of course, the narrative shews to have been Rezon. The Syriac has 'and Rezon reigned in D.,' while the Vulgate gives 'and they made him king in D.'

25. *all the days of Solomon*] Probably Rezon was able to establish himself in Damascus even before the death of David. For some time he would be obliged to collect his strength to be ready for future attacks on Israel, but he may well have been a source of anxiety to Solomon from the first. Damascus was near enough, and a band of men such as those who supported Rezon would make a constant thorn for Solomon's side, even though they attempted no regular warfare.

beside the mischief that Hadad did] This sentence can only be thus translated. There is a similar rendering of the like Hebrew ואת in verse 1 'together with' the daughter of Pharaoh (marg. R. V. 'besides'). But it is very questionable whether this can be so rendered. The LXX. (*Vat.*) which omits 23, 24, and great part of the present verse renders as if, for ואת, they had read זאת = this. See the LXX. variations above, in note on verse 22. These make the whole passage refer not to Rezon but to Hadad, and in consequence the word *Syria*, ארם, i.e. Aram, is changed into אדם, *Edom*, and it is certain that we do expect to hear more of the mischief which Hadad wrought. All we are told is that he got permission to come back to Edom. But we hear no word of any armament or invasion by him.

and he abhorred Israel] Though he had deserted Hadadezer this was no reason why he should side with the Israelitish invaders. They had driven him and his troop into the wilderness and no harm which he could work upon them would be left undone. This is just the sort of opponent who might worry Solomon for a long time without being deemed serious, but who might before the end of Solomon's reign, in the period of that king's unwise yielding to his wives, become really a dangerous adversary. With Hadad in the south and Rezon on the north, each growing daily stronger, the crippling of Solomon's power was effectually begun.

26—40. Rise of Jeroboam's hostility to Solomon. Ahijah's prophetic action and message. (Not in Chronicles.)

26. *Jeroboam the son of Nebat*] This is the first mention of him who afterwards is so frequently spoken of as the man 'who made Israel to sin.' We know nothing more of his parentage than is told us in this verse. His after life comes before us frequently in the succeeding chapters.

an Ephrathite] Better with R.V. **an Ephraimite.** The word Ephra-

Solomon's servant, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow woman, even he lift up *his* hand against the king. And this *was* the cause that he lift up *his* hand against the 27
king: Solomon built Millo, *and* repaired the breaches of the city of David his father. And the man Jeroboam *was* 28
a mighty *man* of valour: and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the

thite would mean one born at Ephratah, i.e. Bethlehem. This cannot be true of Jeroboam, from the words of the verse before us. A similar change is needed in the A.V. of 1 Sam. i. 1 where Elkanah, though described as 'a man of the hill country of Ephraim' is yet subsequently called an 'Ephrathite.'

of Zereda] The Hebrew spelling requires **Zeredah** (as R.V.). This place must have been near or in the hill country of Ephraim. It has been thought by some to be the same as Zeredathah, which is given in 2 Chron. iv. 17 instead of Zarthan of 1 Kings vii. 46, the place near which the castings of brass were made for Solomon's Temple. The LXX. (*Vat.*) gives Σαριρὰ as the name, and in a long addition which that version contains after verse 24 of the next chapter Σαριρὰ occurs several times over. It is also given by the LXX. of 1 Kings xiv. 17 instead of Tirzah, where Jeroboam had his royal residence. That the Greek translators identified this place with some town of great importance will be seen from the note on xii. 24 below, but whether their identification can be trusted is somewhat doubtful.

Solomon's servant] i.e One who had been employed by Solomon. The works were not necessarily unimportant, on which such servants were employed. But it makes the term a little more significant if (with R.V.) we render **a servant of Solomon.**

he lift up his *hand against*] A phrase indicative of rebellion and very expressive here. For Jeroboam was one of Solomon's own people, whose hand might be expected to be with him, and not against him. Josephus marks the difference between this adversary and those previously named, when he calls Jeroboam τῶν ὁμοφύλων τίς.

27. *Millo*] Read **the Millo.** See above on ix. 15.

and repaired the breaches of the city of David] The verb signifies 'to close up' and the noun is in the singular. Hence 'to close up the breach' has been thought to mean the building a wall across the valley between Zion and Moriah, and so making the ravine between these mountains inclosed within the walls. This valley was known at a later time as the Tyropœon. This makes the statement harmonize with ix. 15, where Solomon's object is said to have been 'to build the walls of Jerusalem.'

28. *and Solomon seeing*] The verb is finite, therefore render (with R.V.) **saw.**

was industrious] Literally 'did work.'

he made him ruler over all the charge of, &c.] Better (with R.V., **and he gave him charge over all the labour** (*Heb.* burden) *of the house of Joseph*, i.e. the tribe of Ephraim. The labour here spoken of is that

29 charge of the house of Joseph. And it came to pass at that
time when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the
prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he
had clad himself with a new garment; and they two *were*
30 alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that
31 *was* on him, and rent it *in* twelve pieces: and he said to
Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the LORD,
the God of Israel, Behold, I will rent the kingdom out of
32 the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: (but
he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for

compulsory work, which the Israelites did by turns for parts of the year, and which the tributary subject-population were constantly employed upon. It is not difficult to conceive circumstances under which such duty might become very distasteful to the northern section of the kingdom. For between them and the people of Judah there was a pronounced opposition even in David's time. And the compulsory labour on the walls of Jerusalem was just the sort of occupation to aggravate this old enmity. Jeroboam saw this and took advantage of it.

29. *at that time*] i.e. While the building-works at the Millo and the completion of the wall was in progress.

Ahijah the Shilonite] This prophet, whose home was in Shiloh (see xiv. 2), is mentioned in connexion with this prophecy to Jeroboam and again when Jeroboam has become king, and sends his wife to inquire of the prophet about the issue of his child's sickness. A writing of his is spoken of in 2 Chron. ix. 29 as 'the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite'. This may have contained other prophecies beside those which have been preserved to us. He was evidently a person of much importance and influence during this and the following reign.

found him in the way] Here the LXX. adds 'and he drew him aside out of the way': an addition which may have been made to explain how it came to pass, as is said immediately, that 'they two were alone in the field.'

and he had clad himself] i.e. Ahijah had done so. The R.V. following the LXX. inserts the proper name in italics to make the sense clearer in the English.

30. *and Ahijah caught*] R.V. laid hold of. The word is frequently used of the taking prisoners captive.

31. *Take thee ten pieces*] With this symbolical action of Ahijah may be compared the 'horns of iron' which Zedekiah made (1 Kings xxii. 11) to express most significantly the way in which he prophesied that Ahab should repulse the Syrians.

out of the hand of Solomon] i.e. Of his immediate successor, as is explained in verse 34.

32. *he shall have one tribe*] Benjamin was so small a tribe as scarcely to be worth counting. Judah was to give name to the southern part of the divided kingdom. The LXX. says "two tribes," which

Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel:) because that they have forsaken me, and 33
have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do *that* which *is* right in mine eyes, and *to keep* my statutes and my judgements, as *did* David his father. How- 34
beit I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes: but I will take the kingdom 35
out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, *even* ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David 36
my servant may have a light alway before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And 37
I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it 38
shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee,

seems to be a correction introduced by the translators. See above on verse 13. All the other versions speak of 'one tribe', and so does the LXX. in verse 13.

33. *they have forsaken*] The examples of men in high place are infectious. Solomon's idolatry had led away others, and involved the nation in the sin of the king. The LXX. and other versions however have the verb in the singular.

and to keep *my statutes*] The verb which in the previous clause is rendered 'to do', can in Hebrew be joined with all the nouns that follow (cf. Deut. vi. 24; xvi. 12; xvii. 19; 1 Chron. xxii. 13). The English however requires a different verb with 'statutes.' Hence 'to keep' is inserted in italics, though the Hebrew construction is quite complete.

36. *one tribe*] Here again, as in 32, the LXX. has 'two tribes.'

a light] Literally 'a lamp.' The idea is quite an Oriental one. In the tent was hung the lamp, for constant lighting, and the permanency of the home is implied in the lamp which is not extinguished. Cf. Ps. cxxxii. 17. David's line was to last, though most of the kingdom was taken from his descendants. The LXX. paraphrases by *θέσις*, i.e. a status, position.

37. *according to all that thy soul desireth*] Or (as margin R.V.) 'over all &c.' The prophet was, as it appears, aware of Jeroboam's ambition. Events were leading up to the coming separation of the kingdoms, and there may have been many opportunities for Jeroboam to disclose his desires and aims.

38. *And it shall be* &c.] The condition on which Jeroboam is set

and wilt walk in my ways, and do that *is* right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did; that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee.
39 And I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.
40 Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam. And Jeroboam arose, and fled *into* Egypt, unto Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.
41 And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts
42 of Solomon? And the time that Solomon reigned in Jeru-

up is the same as that laid down for the family of David. As in their case transgression involved a downfall.

and will give Israel unto thee] These words and the whole of verse 39 are omitted in the LXX.

39. *but not for ever*] The glorious promises made to David's line were not to be withdrawn, and in the Messiah were abundantly fulfilled.

40. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam*] No doubt the aspirations of Jeroboam, and the prophetic act and words of Ahijah would come to the king's ears, and make him anxious to remove a rival who had such special encouragement to prosecute his designs.

unto Shishak king of Egypt] This is the first Egyptian king whose name, as distinguished from his title, is recorded in the Old Testament. He has been identified with Sesonchosis, who is mentioned by Manetho as the first king of the twenty-second dynasty. He appears to have come to the throne about 988 B.C. i.e. in the 27th year of Solomon, though some calculations place him a little later. He is mentioned again (xiv. 25) as coming up against Jerusalem in the reign of Rehoboam, and taking away much treasure from the temple and the king's house.

41—43. SOLOMON'S DEATH AND BURIAL. (2 Chron. ix. 29—31.)

41. *And the rest of the acts*] The usual rendering of this phrase is Now the rest, &c. and this has been adopted for uniformity's sake by the R. V. in this place. The word rendered 'acts,' in this and similar passages, means also 'words,' and in the case of such a king as Solomon, whose fame arose greatly from what he spake, it has been thought worth while to put this rendering on the margin, both in A. V. and R. V.

the book of the acts of Solomon] Attached to the royal household was an official recorder, who kept a chronicle of events and thus prepared the sources of future history. In 2 Chron. ix. 29—31 where the parallelism with Kings is taken up again, we have the names of the writers given, viz. 'the history of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat.'

salem over all Israel *was* forty years. And Solomon slept 43
with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his
father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.

And Rehoboam went *to* Shechem: for all Israel were 12

42. *forty years*] The same length of reign as that of Saul and David. If Solomon's accession were 1015 B.C., his death took place in 975 B.C. Josephus gives 'eighty years' as the length of the reign. But this agrees with no other record, and must be regarded as a mistake. King Solomon was not more than 60 years old, if so much, when he died.

43. *And Solomon slept with his fathers*] The LXX. (*Vat.*) continues 'and they buried him in the city of David his father,' and then joins on the words of xii. 2 about Jeroboam hearing of Solomon's death in Egypt, adding, what is not found there, that 'he made ready and came into his own city, into the land Sarira, which is mount Ephraim.'

Ch. XII. 1—15. Rehoboam's accession. Request of his subjects and the king's answer. (2 Chron. x. 1—15.)

1. *And Rehoboam went* to *Shechem*] The parallel passage in 2 Chron. xi. 1—15 is almost identical with what is given here. It is clear from the narrative that, though Rehoboam was acknowledged as the rightful successor to his father, there was a desire among the people to modify the character of the government. David had ruled as a conqueror, and the fame and wealth and great undertakings of Solomon had gratified the people and made them submit to many severities in his reign. Rehoboam had none of the recommendations of his father or grandfather, and the influential persons in the nation availed themselves of the solemn enthronization at Shechem to put forward their desires. It may well be that they had arranged for the ceremony to take place at a distance from Jerusalem, and in one of the principal towns of the north that their proposals might be strongly supported, and that the king might feel how important it was for him to conciliate such a party as they were. If Rehoboam had already been acknowledged as king in Jerusalem, the southern tribes would be less powerfully represented in this meeting at Shechem, and prestige of the grand buildings of Jerusalem and all the splendour which spake of Rehoboam's house would be absent.

Shechem, first mentioned as Sichem in Gen. xii. 6, was a city of considerable antiquity, in the hill country of Ephraim, and of such strength and importance that Jeroboam (see verse 25 below) fortified and strengthened it to be the royal city of the ten tribes, immediately after the revolt. Its name, which signifies *shoulder* or *ridge*, indicates its position among the hills, and Josephus tells us that it was between Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. It has been identified with the modern *Nablous* (formerly Neapolis), and there seems no reason to question the identification.

for all Israel were come to Shechem] We have seen before that there

2 come *to* Shechem to make him king. And it came to pass,
when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt,
heard *of it*, (for he was fled from the presence of king
3 Solomon, and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;) that they sent and
called him. And Jeroboam and all the congregation of
4 Israel came, and spake unto Rehoboam, saying, Thy father
made our yoke grievous: now therefore make thou the

was a distinction, even while the kingdom was all one, between 'the men of Israel' and 'the men of Judah' (see 2 Sam. xix. 40—43). It seems not improbable that the arrangement for this gathering at Shechem was a sort of protest by the men of the north against the southern tribes who, because Jerusalem, with the temple and the royal dwellings, was in their part of the land, may have claimed to be the ruling portion of the nation. Hence a solemn ceremonial held elsewhere in connexion with the accession of the new king would be thought a good means of checking this assumption, even if there had been no further motive for the choice of Shechem. And Rehoboam was obliged to go there, if he would not at once provoke a civil war.

2. *And it came to pass*] The LXX. (*Vat.*) having given the substance of this verse as an addition to xi. 43, omits it here. The R.V. makes the parenthesis commence a little earlier and extend a little farther than is shewn in A.V. The connexion thus becomes: And it came to pass when 'Jeroboam...**heard of it** (**for he** was yet in Egypt **whither** he had fled...**and** they sent...him;) **that** Jeroboam' &c.

heard of it] There must have been some interval between the death of Solomon and the gathering of the people at Shechem. The character and purpose of this meeting must also have been settled beforehand, so that news of what was intended could be carried to Jeroboam, and he, seeing events to be promising for his enterprise, could come back into Israel, and take the lead, as in the next verse he is said to have done, of those who petitioned the new king for reforms.

3. *that they sent*] Better, **And** they sent: see the previous note. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 8, 1) calls this party οἱ τῶν ὅχλων ἄρχοντες, and represents them as sending to Jeroboam immediately after Solomon was dead. Clearly there was a feeling that some change was at hand, and the knowledge of Ahijah's prophecies had not been confined to Jeroboam and Solomon. Hence men were prepared for what was coming.

and called him] Knowing that he would be ready to come, and that his ability and industry (described xi. 28 above) qualified him for a leader of their enterprise.

Jeroboam and all the congregation of Israel] The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits Jeroboam. But the object of sending for him was clearly that he might be the prime mover in the agitation, and by taking part in the popular petition he would prepare the way for the invitation sent to him as mentioned below in verse 20.

4. *make thou the grievous service...lighter*] Josephus says they

grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee. And he said 5 unto them, Depart yet *for* three days, then come again to me. And the people departed. And king Rehoboam con- 6 sulted with the old men, that stood before Solomon his father while he *yet* lived, and said, How do you advise that *I* may answer this people? And they spake unto him, 7 saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people *this* day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever. But 8 he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, *and* which stood before him: and he said unto 9

naturally expected to gain their request, and especially as the king was a young man. The house of Joseph, i.e. the Ephraimites, are specially mentioned as having been engaged in the compulsory labour (see xi. 28) in the previous reign, and over these Jeroboam had been in charge, so that he was conversant with their grievances.

6. *And king Rehoboam consulted*] That the close similarity between the narrative here and 2 Chron. may be as apparent as possible to the English reader, the R.V. reads here as there, **took counsel**, and similarly in verse 8 'and **took counsel** with the young men.' The change is of no importance to the sense, but where two passages are identical in the original they are with advantage represented so in the translation.

the old men] These persons must have been advanced in years, and perhaps were not in public office under Rehoboam. The age of Rehoboam on his accession was 41 years (xiv. 21). (See, however, the note at the end of this chapter.) So though he and his favoured advisers are spoken of as 'young,' they were not so, except in comparison with Solomon's counsellors.

How do you advise that I *may answer*] Here again in R.V. the translation is harmonized with 2 Chron. **What counsel give ye me to return answer.** Though this is certainly not so idiomatic as the English of Kings.

7. *If thou wilt be a servant unto this people* this *day*] Here the words of 2 Chron. are 'If thou be kind to this people and please them.' What was meant was that for the time the king should give way and obey the popular voice. This short service would win for him their constant allegiance. The LXX. does not represent 'and answer them' in this verse.

8. *young men that were grown up with him*] i.e. Who were about the same age. It is not needful to suppose that they had been educated with him from their youth up. They now being his contemporaries were chosen to 'stand before him,' to be his privy counsellors. This office the older men had held under Solomon (see verse 6).

them, What counsel give ye that we may answer this people, who have spoken to me, saying, Make the yoke which thy
10 father did put upon us lighter? And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying, Thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying, Thy father made our yoke heavy, but make thou *it* lighter unto us; thus shalt thou say unto them, My little *finger*
11 shall be thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father hath chastised you with whips, but I
12 will chastise you with scorpions. So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had
13 appointed, saying, Come to me again the third day. And the king answered the people roughly, and forsook the old
14 men's counsel that they gave him; and spake to them after the counsel of the young men, saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father *also* chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with
15 scorpions. Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the

9. *that we may answer*] Better, 'may **return** answer' as the words are precisely those of verse 6. It is noteworthy that Rehoboam includes the young counsellors with himself and says 'we' when he speaks to them, but he employs the singular number 'I' in verse 6, when addressing the older men. He appears to have dispensed summarily with the services of his father's advisers, and taken others into his confidence. One among several marks of folly which are to be found in the history of this business.

10. *my little* finger *shall be* (R.V. **is**) *thicker than my father's loins*] The italics of A.V. shew that the word 'finger' is explanatory, and not represented in the text. The LXX. gives ἡ μικρότης μου. There can however be no doubt that 'my littleness' is here correctly expounded by 'my little finger,' as the Vulgate, Josephus, the Syriac version and ancient Jewish commentators explain it.

11. *with whips*] We have no record of such an act on the part of Solomon, and it may be the phrase is only metaphorical, to express a light degree of chastisement in comparison of what they might hereafter expect. But scourging men to urge them in compulsory labour is not unknown in despotic countries.

with scorpions] Most likely, if the words are to be taken literally, some sort of lash on which metal points were fixed so that each blow might wound like a scorpion's sting.

12. *So Jeroboam and all the people*] The LXX. here, as in verse 3, omits 'Jeroboam.'

as the king had appointed] R.V. has 'as the king **bade**.'

15. *Wherefore the king*] Better, as R.V., '**So** the king.' The origi-

people; for the cause was from the LORD, that *he* might perform his saying, which the LORD spake by Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them, the people answered the king, saying, 16

What portion have we in David?

Neither *have we* inheritance in the son of Jesse:

To your tents, O Israel:

Now see to thine own house, David.

So Israel departed unto their tents. But *as for* the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah, Rehoboam 17

nal has merely the ordinary copulative ו, and there is no giving of a reason implied, but the summing up of a narrative.

for the cause was from the Lord] R.V. **for it was a thing brought about of the Lord.** The Hebrew noun signifies 'the turn of events' and is represented in the LXX. by *μεταστροφή*. For a similar idea, compare the case of Pharaoh (Exod. iv. 21). Also (Acts ii. 23) 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.' Josephus says these events happened *κατὰ τὴν τοῦ θεοῦ βούλησιν*. The course of events had been shaped by Solomon's transgression, and they were left by God to work out their natural results. The sin of the father was here visited on the child.

perform his saying] R.V. **establish his word.** This is the rendering of the same words in A.V. 1 Sam. i. 23, and 'to establish' or 'confirm' a word, is a more natural expression than 'to perform' it. For the word of Ahijah cf. above xi. 31.

16—20. REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES (Cf. 2 Chron. x. 16—19).

16. *all Israel saw that the king hearkened not*] Josephus says 'they were struck by his words as by an iron rod and grieved as though the words of the king had been actually put into execution.'

What portion have we in David?] Very similar words were used (2 Sam. xx. 1) by Sheba the Benjamite when he strove to rouse the people against David. The tribe of Judah was more closely connected with the house of Jesse, because his home was at Bethlehem.

To your tents, O Israel] i.e. Disperse to your homes, that you may take steps for protecting yourselves, and arranging for resistance to the threatened severity.

see to thine own house] As though the tribe to which he belonged was now all that would be left to him. The LXX. reads *βόσκε τὸν οἶκόν σου*, as though their text had been רעה='to feed' and not as in the Massoretic text ראה=to see.

17. *the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah*] We see from expressions like this that we must not necessarily make 'Israel' include only the northern tribes. See above on verse 1.

The LXX. omits this verse entirely.

18 reigned over them. Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram, who *was* over the tribute; and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died. Therefore king Rehoboam made
19 speed to get *him* up to *his* chariot, to flee *to* Jerusalem. So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.
20 And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again, that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel: there was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only.

18. *Then king Rehoboam sent Adoram*] The same man who is called Adoniram in ch. iv. 6. He presided over the forced-labour service, and it was an additional sign of the infatuation of Rehoboam, that a person so likely to be obnoxious to the people should be sent as the king's representative. Josephus tells us that Rehoboam's design was to appease and mollify the irritation caused by his answer. He could hardly have found worse means for his end.

who was *over the tribute*] Read, with R.V. 'over the **levy**.' See above on iv. 6.

and all Israel stoned him] The LXX. omits 'all Israel.'

Therefore king Rehoboam made speed] The marginal rendering of A.V. points out the literal meaning of the verb in this clause 'he strengthened himself.' The idea is 'he made use of every effort,' 'exerted himself much,' seeing that there was danger threatening him as well as his messenger. It appears from this verse, that little time had elapsed between the answer of Rehoboam and the sending of Adoram to appease the irritated leaders. All this was done and Adoram killed before Rehoboam left Shechem. The haughty stern answer and the sudden change to a policy of a more lenient nature are alike marks of the weak character of the new king.

19. *unto this day*] This phrase occurring several times in the book marks the original composition, from which the compiler of the Kings drew his material, as written while the two kingdoms were still existent, and under different rulers.

20. *when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again*] R.V. **was returned**. This change is made because the words are like 2 Chron. x. 2, and the two should be represented as agreeing. The movement described in these words is that of the whole ten tribes. At first Jeroboam had been summoned by the leading men that he might be their adviser and perhaps spokesman. Now when their request has been rejected the whole people agree that he shall be made their king.

but the tribe of Judah only] So Rehoboam was left in the position of David at his accession, king of Judah only. The LXX. adds here 'and Benjamin' to accord with the previous variations in xi. 32 and 36. See notes there.

And when Rehoboam was come *to* Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen *men*, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon. But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and *to* the remnant of the people, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from me. They hearkened therefore to the word of the LORD, and returned to depart, according to the word of the LORD.

21 22 23 24

21—24. REHOBOAM PREPARES TO MAKE WAR ON ISRAEL BUT THIS IS FORBIDDEN BY THE PROPHET SHEMAIAH (2 Chron. xi. 1—4).

21. *all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin*] Called in 2 Chron. 'the house of Judah and Benjamin.' Thus Benjamin is shewn to have been, as it were, reckoned with Judah rather than as a separate tribe.

an hundred and fourscore thousand] The LXX. gives the number as 120,000. Though apparently enormous, neither number is excessive when we recall Joab's numbering (2 Sam. xxiv. 9), at which time the men of Judah were found to be 500,000. But subsistence for so large a population must have been very difficult to find in so small a state.

22. *the word of God*] How Shemaiah and other prophets received their commission is not always explained. Sometimes it is said 'the Lord sent' (cf. 2 Sam. xii. 1, 25). The prompting by a vision in sleep is most frequently recorded, and this we may assume in other cases to have been the way in which God's message came.

Shemaiah] Beside the present notice of him, Shemaiah is also mentioned at the time when Shishak, king of Egypt, invaded Judæa and besieged Jerusalem (2 Chron. xii. 5, 7). He then was sent with a message of comfort to the princes of Judah. In 2 Chron. xii. 15 he is said to have written a chronicle of the reign of Rehoboam.

23. *and* to *the remnant of the people*] (R.V. the rest). We see from verse 17 above that there were some people belonging to the ten tribes who were dwelling in the cities of Judah. These would have their ties in the place where they had long lived, and so would cast in their lot with the southern kingdom, rather than, because of the division, remove from their homes and seek new ones in the north. These must be intended by 'the remnant of the people.'

24. *for this thing is from me*] See above on verse 15.

and returned to depart] This is the literal rendering of the original, but is Hebrew rather than English. In R.V. the sense is given by 'and

25 Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and
dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penu
26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingd
27 return to the house of David: if this people go up to
sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then sl
the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, *even* un
Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go

returned and went their way. The LXX. has καὶ κατέπαυσαν τοῦ πορευθῆναι, 'and they ceased from going.'

At this point the LXX. (*Vat.*) has a long passage inserted, for an account of which see additional note at the end of this chapter.

25—33. JEROBOAM SETS UP GOLDEN CALVES IN DAN AND BETHEL, AND THUS MAKES ISRAEL TO SIN. (Not in 2 Chron.)

25. *built Shechem*] i.e. Strengthened it by walls and made it thus fit to be the royal residence, 'the political centre of a confederation whose military leader bore the title of king.' It had in early days been a strong town with gates, but was overthrown by Abimelech (see Jud. ix. 45). For 'mount Ephraim' here, we should rather read as elsewhere, with R. V., '**the hill country** of Ephraim.'

Penuel] This place was in the country of Gilead, on the east of the Jordan. When Gideon (Jud. viii. 8) in his pursuit after the Midianites crossed from the west side to the east of the Jordan, the first place mentioned in his route is Succoth, and after that Penuel. It was important for Jeroboam to have a stronghold on both sides of the river, as his subjects lived on both sides, and this town, Penuel, was no doubt a post of consequence, as it was evidently near to the fords of the Jordan, so that a force stationed there would protect the land from invaders.

26. *And Jeroboam said in his heart*] Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 8, 4) says the idea was forced on the king's mind by the approach of the Feast of Tabernacles, at which it had been usual for the people to go up in great numbers to Jerusalem, and to live there for some days.

27. *if this people go up to do sacrifice*] There appears to have been no thought in the popular mind that the choice of a different ruler for the ten tribes would break their connexion with the worship at the Temple. So that we must judge the Temple to have now become the *one* recognised place for worship. The R. V. represents the Hebrew more closely by rendering **to offer sacrifices.**

then shall the heart of this people turn] After the first excitement of the revolt was over, and Jeroboam had begun to exercise lordship in his turn, the attraction of the Temple, and the prestige of the older family, and especially the glories attaching to the house of David would begin to reassert their power. Jeroboam expresses this feeling when he still calls Rehoboam 'their lord.'

they shall kill me] When they have begun to repent of the step

again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took 28
counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them,
it *is* too much for you to go up *to* Jerusalem: behold thy gods,
O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan. 29
v

which they have taken at my leading. Such reaction of feeling is more common in Eastern than in Western minds.

and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah] The LXX. omits these words. The title 'king of Judah' is first used in this chapter, here and above in verse 23.

28. *two calves of gold*] The Israelites in Egypt had been familiarized with the ox as an object of worship, and it would therefore not be unknown among their descendants. Hence their readiness to recognize such an image as a symbol of the divinity when they were in the wilderness (Exod. xxxii. 4, 8). The sin was the same on this occasion as on that. God had commanded that no image should be made as a symbol of Him. The calves were therefore an abomination, (directly contrary to Exod. xx. 4), even though when bowing before them the people professed to worship Him who led their fathers out of Egypt.

The LXX says 'he went and made' ἐπορεύθη καὶ ἐποίησε, and instead of 'and said unto them,' in the next clause, which reads a little awkwardly, gives 'and said unto the people.'

It is *too much for you to go up*] The sense intended is probably given in the margin of R. V. 'Ye have gone up long enough.' To the mind of the Jew there might be a reason for ceasing altogether to go to Jerusalem, now that the kingdoms were divided, but no excuse from the fatigue of the journey. Jeroboam's argument was 'You have chosen a new king, choose also new places for worship.' Cf. Ezek. xliv. 6, where the sense is 'Have done with your abominations.'

behold thy gods] Words very like those of the people in the wilderness (Exod. xxxii. 4) over their golden calf. But the sense is rather: 'Behold thy God.' Under this symbol of the young bull, see and recognise thy God, Jehovah. The young bull was the symbol of creative power.

29. *in Beth-el*] The well-known city in the extreme south of the tribe of Ephraim, and so just on the southern border of the new kingdom of Israel.

in Dan] The town, formerly called Laish, in the very north of Palestine, and always mentioned as a limit of the land in the phrase 'from Dan to Beersheba.' It was so remote from the influence of the rest of the nation that its inhabitants lived 'after the manner of the Zidonians.' They were, that is, sea-faring people, rather than shepherds and husbandmen like the rest of their brethren. The places chosen by Jeroboam were at either limit of his kingdom, and had been associated with religious worship in ancient times. See Judg. xviii. 30; xx. 18, 26; 1 Sam. x. 3.

30 And this thing became a sin: for the people went
31 *worship* before the one, *even* unto Dan. And he ma
a house of high places, and made priests of the lowe
32 of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. A
Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on t
fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that *is*
Judah, and he offered upon the altar (so did he in Beth-e

30. *And this thing became a sin*] Being in contradiction of th second commandment.

for the people went to worship *before the one, even unto Dan*] appears as though by these words it was intended to shew how fully the people were led astray. To far-off Dan even did they go. This had been associated with worship aforetime, though it was idolatrous. Judg. xviii. 30. There was no need to point out that they went to Bethel. That had been a place of worship before, and in consequence had sacred associations. Of course they were not hard to persuade to go there. But Jeroboam's device was successful in respect of the other shrine also.

The LXX. adds to this verse 'and they neglected the house of the Lord.'

31. *An house of high places*] The graven image must have its temple. So in Bethel and in Dan buildings were raised, and an eminence chosen for the site of each. Hence it is better to render the plural notion, as R. V., **houses of high places.**

and made priests of the lowest of the people] Better, as R. V. **'and made priests from among all the people.'** The noun properly means 'an end', 'an extremity.' Then in the plural, as it is here, 'the extremities,' which between them comprise the whole space of anything. Thus the word is rendered in Judges xviii. 2 (R. V.) 'five men *from their whole number*.' Here the idea is that Jeroboam's priests were taken from anywhere, and so the selection differed much from that of the southern kingdom, where one tribe alone held the priest's office. The Levites who before the division of the kingdom had been scattered among all the tribes, now, in the main, withdrew to the southern tribes (2 Chron. xi. 13, 14).

32. *And Jeroboam ordained a feast*] This was intended to be a set-off for the Feast of Tabernacles, of the celebration of which, in Jerusalem, Jeroboam had been so much in fear.

in the eighth month on the fifteenth day] The Feast of Tabernacles was on the fifteenth day of the *seventh* month (Lev. xxiii. 34). Jeroboam came as near as he could but chose a later month, perhaps induced to do so because the harvest-celebration kept at the Feast of Tabernacles could be very well placed later in the northern part of the land. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 8. 5) says, contrary to all other authorities, that Jeroboam's feast was in the *seventh* month.

and he offered upon the altar] The verb sometimes means 'to go up unto,' and this is represented on the margin of A. V. The text and margin change places in R. V., because the sacrificing is spoken of

ag:rificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed
..o Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had
hu ade. So he offered upon the altar which he had made in 33
w. th-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, *even* in the
k: onth which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained
v feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the
wl tar, and burnt incense.
m(

1 the words which immediately follow. Read, **he went up unto**, and wo twice over in verse 33.

a) *so did he in Beth-el*] The king himself took part in the dedication of the southern high place. The more distant Dan perhaps was inaugurated by some of the newly-made priests. Thus Jeroboam in some degree imitated Solomon's dedication of the Temple.

33. *which he had devised of his own heart*] This is a translation of the Keri, i.e. the marginal reading of the Hebrew. The Kethîb (i.e. the written text) would be rendered 'apart,' and if it be correct must be understood, as intimating that the king consulted nobody which comes much to the same as what we now translate. The difference to the eye between מלבד='apart,' and מלבו='from his heart' is very slight.

and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense] The marginal note of the A. V. points out that the last verb is in the infinitive. By translating with R. V. this is made apparent in the text **and went up unto the altar to burn incense.**

On the addition in the LXX. after verse 24.

This long passage has many peculiarities not only in the arrangement, which differs considerably from that of the narrative of the Hebrew text, but also in some portions of its contents. It takes up the history at xi. 43 with Solomon's death and Rehoboam's accession. But it gives different numbers, both for the age of Rehoboam when he began to reign and for the duration of his reign, from those in the Hebrew text. Instead of 41 years old (as in xiv. 21) he is here stated to have been 16, and to have reigned 12 and not 17 years. It must be owned that the conduct of Rehoboam is much more like that of a very young man than of one who had passed middle-age. The LXX. continues the history with an account of Jeroboam, stating that his mother's name was Sarira, *γυνὴ πόρνη*, and that he was put over the levy of the house of Joseph. And Jeroboam built for Solomon a city, also called Sarira, in the hill country of Ephraim, and was employed in the buildings around Jerusalem, and began to aspire to the kingdom. Then follows Solomon's attempt to kill him, and his flight into Egypt, the king of which is Shishak (*Σουσακίμ*). After this the story is an exact parallel of what is given in the Hebrew about Hadad (xi. 19—22). Jeroboam finds favour with Shishak, and marries Ano, the elder sister of Thekemina, the wife of the king. He seeks to return, but is hardly

13 And behold, there came a man of God out of Judah *to* de

allowed to go. At length he comes back to Sarira, gathers the people and fortifies the place. After this follows the sickness of his son and his wife's visit to Ahijah, somewhat like the narrative in xiv. 1—he Next we are told of a gathering at Shechem where both Rehoboam a Jeroboam are present, and it is said that on this occasion Shemai in the prophet (and not Ahijah) rent his garment and gave ten parts l,) Jeroboam to signify the ten tribes over which he was hereafter to l king. Next comes the account of the popular petition to Rehoboam, he and his delay and final answer; then his flight from Shechem t Jerusalem and the preparations for war, which is forbidden by She maiah.

Among other peculiarities of this form of the story may be added that the Egyptian wife is said to have been given to Jeroboam after his first request to be allowed to depart, apparently with a view to make him more contented. In the account of the visit of inquiry about the sick child, Ahijah says, 'Thou shalt go forth from me, and it shall be when thou enterest into the city, into Sarira, that thy maidens shall come out to meet thee, and shall say, 'The child is dead,' and further on it is added 'and the cry of mourning came to meet her.' There is an addition also to the complaint which is presented to Rehoboam, 'Thy father made his yoke heavy upon us', καὶ ἐβάρ νε τὰ βρώματα τῆς τραπέζης αὐτοῦ, 'and he made burdensome the meat of his table'; a sentence which seems to relate to the demands made so largely on the various districts for the supply of Solomon's table. A different form is given also when the revolt begins, 'And all the people spake, as one man, each to his neighbour, and they all cried out, saying, We have no part in David &c..... Each of you to your tents, O Israel, for this man is not to be our prince or our leader.' It is also said that Rehoboam's preparation for war was made ἐνιστα-μένου τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ, 'when the year came round': a phrase which has very close parallels in the Greek of 2 Sam. xi. 1; 1 Kings xx. 22, 26; and is so completely after the Hebrew manner that from this and much beside in the passage we can hardly doubt that it is derived from some Hebrew original. But the numerous inconsistencies found in it make it unworthy to be put in comparison with the story as recorded in the sacred text. It partakes very much of the character of those additions which we find made in the LXX. to the story of Ezra and Daniel, and, though of interest as a specimen of this kind of literature, cannot be accepted as raising any serious questions about the general correctness of the Massoretic text in the history of Jeroboam.

CHAP. XIII. 1—10. PROPHECY AGAINST JEROBOAM'S ALTAR IN BETHEL. WITHERING AND RESTORATION OF JEROBOAM'S HAND. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *A man of God*] Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 8, 5) says this prophet whom the narrative does not name was called Jadon (Ἰαδὼν ὄνομα).

out of Judah] Out of *Judah* to speak the word of the Lord in

the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he cried against the altar 2
in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child *shall be* born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the

Israel. Later on Israel had her own prophets. Josephus also says he came from Jerusalem.

by the word of the Lord] Those who would not follow with Jeroboam in his worship of the calves had most likely all departed from the northern kingdom. But if this were not so, God would still choose His special messenger from that portion of the people who still clung to the pure worship at Jerusalem.

and Jeroboam stood by the altar] The Hebrew is better rendered by the R. V. **was standing**. The appearance of the prophet of Judah took place at the moment when the king was about to engage in the act of worship. We cannot be sure that the offering of incense by one who was not of the priestly race would be counted a sin in the days of Jeroboam. King Solomon (1 Kings viii. 62, 63, 64) is described as offering sacrifice, peace offerings and burnt offerings, without anything to indicate that it was not lawful. But no doubt as time went on, and probably before the composition of the history before us, the persons who alone were allowed to offer at the altars were the priests and Levites.

2. *he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord*] The Hebrew is the same as in the preceding verse. Render therefore (with R. V.) '**by** the word.' The meaning is that both the journey from Judah and the prophecy were in consequence of divine instruction.

Josiah by name] The history of the fulfilment of this prophecy is in 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16. Between the accession of Jeroboam and the accession of Josiah was an interval of about 330 years. Hence the name of the king who should execute the threatened vengeance is mentioned, this prophecy is remarkable among the predictions of the Old Testament. There is nothing with which it can be compared except the prophecy concerning Cyrus in Isaiah xliv. 28 and xlv. 1, nor is it according to the manner of scriptural prophecies to be precise about details such as this. Hence some have thought that this verse and also other parts of the story of this chapter were brought into their present form at a later date than Jeroboam. The story of the appearance of the prophet and of his prediction were known from the first, but the details here given were inserted when the prediction was accomplished. There is certainly in verse 32 a notice of the 'cities of Samaria' which confirms this opinion. Jeroboam's capital was Shechem, and Samaria was not built, nor any district so called, till the reign of Omri the father of Ahab (1 Kings xvi. 24). Again, it is unlike the rest of the narrative of the Books of Kings that no name should be given to either of the prophets who play such a part in the story. It seems therefore probable that the chapter is taken from some

priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and
3 men's bones shall be burnt upon thee. And he gave a sign
the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath
spoken; Behold, the altar *shall be* rent, and the ashes that
4 *are* upon it shall be poured out. And it came to pass, when
king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which
had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his
hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his

other source than that which supplied what has gone before and what follows it. If this be so, we need not be surprised at what was noticed on the previous verse, that Jeroboam's action in approaching the altar seems noted as impious while Solomon's sacrifices are accepted. The compiler of the Books of Kings gathered his material from various sources, and did his work after Josiah was dead. There is no difficulty in understanding how by that time the story as he has given it had been put on record, and as he wished to place Jeroboam's sin in a strong light all through his history, the events here recorded were exceedingly appropriate for incorporation in his narrative.

upon thee shall he offer the priests] The verb is that which is usually rendered **sacrifice**, and it is better (with R. V.) so to translate it. Josephus states specifically 'upon thee shall he sacrifice the false priests which shall be at that time'. Not only was the king to defile the altar by casting upon it the bones of the dead, but his righteous vengeance was to fall also upon the idolatrous priests then living, and they were to be slain by him before the altars at which they ministered.

men's bones shall be burnt] R.V. **shall they burn.** There is no gain apparent in departing from the literal rendering of the original.

3. *And he gave a sign the same day*] The sign was necessary because the event foretold was to be at so remote a date that none who were living in Jeroboam's day would be alive to see it. Hence to assure them that it would come to pass a startling token of the power in which the prophet spake is exhibited by the rending of the altar and the scattering of what was on it in the presence of all who stood by. The word מוֹפֵת rendered 'sign', is much more frequently used of 'wonders' and 'miracles', and it has that sense in some degree here. With this we may compare the use of *τέρας* as well as *σημεῖον* for the miracles of the New Testament.

and the ashes that are *upon it*] The Hebrew word, which is the same as that so often rendered 'fatness', applies only to the ashes *of an altar*, which would be mixed up with the fat of sacrifices burnt upon it. Hence the LXX. renders by *ἡ πιότης* 'the fat', or 'fatness'.

4. *he put forth his hand from the altar*] He was busy in the operations connected with the sacrifice, but the words of the prophet roused his anger, and the raised hand is the sign of his wrath, as well as a signal to those who were near him, pointing out that the speaker was to be seized. Hence it is said immediately 'which he put forth against him.' The R.V. has observed the order of the Hebrew in which the

hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it again to him. The altar also *was* rent, 5
and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. And the king answered and said unto the man of 6
God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before. And the 7
king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh *thyself*, and I will give thee a reward. And the man 8
of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: for so was it charged me by 9
the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink

proper name Jeroboam comes in the second clause of the verse and not in the first: thus 'when the king heard.....Jeroboam put forth, &c.'

dried up] The effect described is that of a limb becoming rigid, not so much shrivelling, as stiffening. Josephus says it was 'numbed and dead'.

6. *Intreat now the face of the Lord thy God*] Here the R. V. has adopted the rendering of the phrase by A.V. in Ps. cxix. 58; Prov. xix. 6 "Intreat now the **favour**, &c." The idea of the original word is that of soothing, so as to relax the frowns and anger of any one, and hence to gain favour instead of displeasure. We are not to conclude because Jeroboam says 'the Lord thy God' that he himself had ceased to acknowledge Jehovah. But in the present circumstances God was evidently more favourable to the prophet than to the king and this Jeroboam intends to express.

and pray for me] These words are omitted in the LXX. (*Vat.*).

besought the Lord] The expression is exactly the same in the Hebrew as in the former part of the verse. So the R. V. has here '**intreated** the Lord'. To insert 'the favour' a second time would make the verse read heavily, but there seems no reason for varying the verb.

7. *Come home with me*] The subsequent narrative shews that there was no alteration in Jeroboam's feelings or intentions in consequence of what had occurred. He still went on in his evil way. But he would fain have the man of God continue in his company a while, that his people might not be terrified by what had happened and decide to break off from the calf-worship and go up to Jerusalem to the Temple again.

8. *neither will I eat bread nor drink water*] There was to be no communion between the idolaters and the worshippers of Jehovah; and this is strongly marked by the refusal of the prophet even to taste food with the king, which he tells him was the command of the Lord.

10 water, nor turn again by the *same* way that thou camest. So
he went another way, and returned not by the way that he
came to Beth-el.
11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and his son
came and told him all the works that the man of God had
done *that* day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken
12 unto the king, them they told also to their father. And
their father said unto them, What way went he? For his
sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came

9. *nor turn again by the* same *way*] There is nothing in the original for 'same'. Therefore the R.V. is more close to the text, in giving **neither return by the way** as in the following verse in A.V. The injunction to go back by another way was given lest after what happened in Bethel those who had seen him coming might try to detain him and he be thus tempted to lessen the effect of his mission. The refusal to eat and the hurried departure were to shew how the Lord was grieved at the national sin.

11—22. THE PROPHET OF JUDAH IS DECEIVED AND BROUGHT BACK TO BETHEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

11. *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el*] Josephus describes him as 'a wicked old man, a false prophet, whom Jeroboam had in honour, being deceived by him because he spake things to his liking'. He says too that 'he was bedridden' 'because of the weakness of old age, (though this is difficult to reconcile with his riding forth after the man of God,) and that when he heard of all that had taken place he was fearful that the stranger would surpass him in the estimation of Jeroboam, and gain more honour than he'. The man can hardly have been a true prophet of Jehovah, or he would not have countenanced, even by the presence of his sons, the calf-worship which God had forbidden. His favour with the king, and his desire to retain it, are Josephus' exposition of the story.

and his son came] R.V. **and one of his sons came.** The noun and the two verbs 'came' and 'told' are singular, but before the close of the verse there comes in a plural verb and pronoun '*they* told also to *their* father'. The language is very natural. One son was the principal reporter, but when the story was dwelt upon the rest filled out the narrative till the father had a complete knowledge of the whole occurrence. Instead of the final words of this verse 'them they told also to their father' the LXX. has καὶ ἐπέστρεψαν τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν. The same phrase is employed in Judges xviii. 23 of persons turning round on hearing a cry, and the text of the LXX. probably implies that the father's attention was arrested by the story.

12. *For* (R.V. Now) *his sons had seen*] This rendering is in accordance with the Massoretic pointing וַיִּרְאוּ but all the Versions translate as if the verb had been וַיַּרְאוּ, the Hiphil, 'and his sons shewed *him*'.

from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. 13
So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon, and went 14
after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak:
and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest
from Judah? And he said, I *am*. Then he said unto him, 15
Come home with me, and eat bread. And he said, I may 16
not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat
bread nor drink water with thee in this place: for it was said 17
to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread
nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that
thou camest. He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also as 18
thou *art;* and an angel spake unto me by the word of the
LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house,
that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto
him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in 19
his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they 20
sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the

14. *under an oak*] The tree named in the Hebrew is probably the terebinth. The noun has the article in the original, and it refers perhaps to some well-known tree which was a landmark in the neighbourhood. The terebinth is a very longlived tree, and an aged one would be sure to become noted.

16. *in this place*] The prophet had not gone far from Bethel before he sat down to rest. The events of the day had been such as to ask for it.

18. *He said unto him*] The Hebrew has the conjunction '**And** he said': there is no reason for its omission in the English.

I am *a prophet also*] The order of the R.V. is to be preferred. 'I also am a prophet' i.e. as well as you.

an angel spake unto me] The old prophet does not lay claim to so solemn a message, as that which the prophet of Judah had received directly 'by the word of the Lord.' And in this the Judæan prophet's sin lay that he did not seek as much confirmation for the reversed order as he had for that which came to him at first.

19. *So he went back with him*] The LXX., by reading slightly different vowel points, renders 'So he turned him back'. Josephus thinks these things were from God as in the case of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. 'These things happened, I think, according to the will of God, that Jeroboam might give no heed to the words of Jadon, as he had been convicted of falsehood', i.e. he had said he would not return, and then had done so.

20. *as they sat at the table*] They were having a proper meal. The expression 'to eat bread and to drink water' signifies 'to take food and drink' and must not be understood literally. The idea meant to be conveyed by the prohibition is that nothing of any sort was to be taken.

21 prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man
of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD,
Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD,
and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy
22 God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten
bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD*
did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy
carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.
23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after
he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for
24 the prophet whom he had brought back. And when he

21. *as thou hast disobeyed*] The expression is precisely the same as in verse 26 below. There the A.V. has 'disobedient unto', and for the sake of consistency that rendering has been adopted here by R.V. 'as thou hast **been disobedient** unto'. A very frequent translation is 'to rebel against the word of the Lord'. See margin of R.V.

22. the LORD *did say to thee*] There is no need for the italics of the A.V. There can be no mistaking who is meant if we render (with R.V.) '**he** said to thee.

thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers] With the Jews, as since with Christians, burial rites were much regarded. To be cast out unburied was deemed a great calamity (cf. Ps. lxxix. 3; Jer. xiv. 16), and a judgement for sin, as in the case of Jezebel (2 Kings ix. 10). To be buried by the side of one's ancestors shews that all care has been bestowed upon the corpse. In the present instance the deprivation of such burial is equivalent to death in some unusual way and at a distance from home.

23—32. THE PROPHET OF JUDAH IS SLAIN. HE IS BURIED, AND HIS WORDS CONFIRMED, BY THE OLD PROPHET. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *he saddled for him the ass*] There has been no mention before of an ass belonging to the prophet of Judah, but as travelling was ordinarily performed in this way, we may suppose that he had ridden from Jerusalem, and had been riding back. Instead of the concluding words of this verse 'to wit, for &c.' the LXX. has 'and he turned and went away.'

Because the word 'prophet' הנביא is not used elsewhere in the story for the Judæan prophet, who is always called 'a man of God,' some have rendered the last part of this verse 'he saddled for him the ass, the ass belonging to the prophet who had brought him back.' But it seems far more natural to take the לו = *for* him, as in close relation to the לנביא = *for* the prophet, as they are both introduced by the same preposition.

was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase. And behold, men passed 25
by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt. And when the prophet that 26
brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, It *is* the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him. And he spake to 27
his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*. And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the 28
ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass. And the prophet took 29
up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him. And he laid his carcase in his 30
own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother. And it came to pass, after he had buried him, 31

24. *a lion met him*] That beasts of prey were common in the land at this time we may see from the history of the shepherd life of David, where he encountered both a lion and a bear (1 Sam. xvii. 34). The death of the prophet was caused by a stroke of the beast's paw, but to shew that it was a visitation of the Lord, the natural instinct of the lion to devour what it has slain is checked, and instead of tearing the body, it stands by it as a guard.

25. *told* it *in the city where the old prophet dwelt*] As Bethel has been already mentioned it is not easy to see why this circumlocution is made use of. Perhaps the idea is that the news was carried in all directions by the passers by and so came among other places to that where he dwelt whom it specially concerned.

26. *disobedient unto the word*] The R.V. gives here as the A.V. in verse 21 **unto the mouth**. This is the literal rendering, and is as intelligible as the other. The LXX. (*Vat.*) gives for this verse only: 'And he who brought him back from the way heard it and said, This is the man of God who rebelled against the word of the Lord.' The next verse (27) is not represented at all in that version.

29. *to mourn and to bury him*] These words are also left out in the LXX. (*Vat.*).

30. *in his own grave*] Treating him as though he had been one of his own family.

Alas, my brother] This seems to have been a form of lamentation used over the dead. Cf. Jer. xxii. 18.

that he spake to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried;
32 lay my bones beside his bones: for the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.
33 After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he
34 became *one of* the priests of the high places. And this thing

31. *lay my bones beside his bones*] Here the LXX. adds 'in order that my bones may be preserved along with his bones.' And Josephus expands this idea thus: "for he would not be outraged after his death if he were buried along with him, for the bones would not be recognized." After which he adds to the story: "And having buried the prophet and given this charge to his sons, being wicked and impious he goes to Jeroboam and says: 'Why wast thou troubled by the words of that foolish man?' And when the king related what had happened to the altar and to his own hand, calling the man a truly divine and excellent prophet, he began to efface this opinion of him by calumnious words and by using misleading language about the things which had occurred, to weaken their real import. For he tried to persuade him that his hand had become numb through fatigue in lifting the victims, and that when relieved it had returned to its natural state; and that the altar being new and having so many large victims put on it was broken and fell to pieces by the weight of its load. He also pointed to the death of him who had foretold these signs, how he was slain by the lion."

32. *high places which* are *in the cities of Samaria*] On the building of Samaria, see 1 Kings xvi. 24. The occurrence of these words in the narrative seems clear evidence that the story in its present form is not contemporary with the events, and may therefore have been written down even later than Josiah's time. See above on verse 2.

33—34. JEROBOAM GOES ON IN HIS EVIL WAY. (Not in Chronicles.)

33. *made again of the lowest of the people*] R.V. **made again from among all the people.** See note on xii. 31 above.

he consecrated him] The Hebrew expression is 'he filled his hand.' See margin of A.V. The idea is 'he intrusted this solemn office to his charge.'

and he became one of *the priests of the high places*] The insertion of the italic 'one of' shews that the construction is irregular. The R.V. gives, **that there might be priests of the high places.** But the awkwardness of the Hebrew which has the verb in the singular and the noun in the plural is not removed thereby. It can be explained but not imitated in a translation. 'Whosoever would' in the previous clause is singular in form but plural in notion. Hence the latter por-

became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam fell sick. And 14
Jeroboam said to his wife, Arise, I pray thee, and disguise 2
thyself, that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam; and get thee *to* Shiloh: behold, there *is* Ahijah the prophet, which told me that I should be king over this people. And 3
take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of

tion of the verse says 'whosoever would he became,' but as there were many who did so, the result was not one priest but many 'priests of the high places.'

34. The Hebrew text here also is not clear. Literally it is 'in this thing there came to be &c.' But the A.V. and all other versions translate as though the Hebrew were the same as in the beginning of xii. 30. Probably the variation is only a slip of the scribe.

to cut it *off and to destroy* it] God's judgement wrought the destruction, but yet it was the sin which called it forth. Hence the sin may be called the destroying power. Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned only two years (xv. 25), and then met a violent death at the hand of Baasha.

CHAP. XIV. 1—20. JEROBOAM'S INQUIRY CONCERNING HIS SICK CHILD. THE PROPHET'S ANSWER. CLOSE OF JEROBOAM'S REIGN. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *At that time*] The order of the narrative shews that the writer of Kings connects the sickness of Jeroboam's son with the events which have been narrated in the previous chapter in the nature of a divine judgement. The whole of this section 1—20 is omitted by the LXX. (*Vat.*)

2. *and disguise thyself*] She was to put on such a dress that no one would recognise her for the queen. Jeroboam no doubt felt that the prophets generally were against him, and that if it were known that he was the applicant, he would receive an unfavourable answer. Josephus describes the queen as putting aside her royal robe, and assuming the dress of a private person. Otherwise she could scarcely have gone abroad on her errand. Of course she was also to conceal her identity from Ahijah, but as he was not able to see, the dress would have mattered little on his account. In the LXX. (*Alex.*) it is said 'they shall not know thee', i. e. people generally.

Ahijah] On Ahijah and Shiloh see above on xi. 29.

which told me that I should be king] R.V. 'which spake concerning me that I should be king'. This is somewhat nearer to the Hebrew, but the difficulty is in the word rendered 'that I should be king' which is a noun with a preposition לְמֶלֶךְ='for a king', where we should have expected rather the verbal form לִמְלֹךְ.

3. *cracknels*] The word so rendered is found only here and in

honey, and go to him: he shall tell thee what shall become of
4 the child. And Jeroboam's wife did so, and arose, and went *to*
Shiloh, and came *to* the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could
5 not see; for his eyes were set by reason of his age. And the
LORD said unto Ahijah, Behold, the wife of Jeroboam com-
eth to ask a thing of thee for her son; for he *is* sick: thus
and thus shalt thou say unto her: for it shall be, when she
cometh in, that she shall feign herself to be another *woman*.
6 And it was *so*, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as
she came in at the door, that he said, Come in, thou wife of
Jeroboam; why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I *am*
7 sent to thee *with* heavy *tidings*. Go, tell Jeroboam, Thus
saith the LORD God of Israel, Forasmuch as I exalted thee
from among the people, and made thee prince over my

Joshua ix. 5, of the bread of the Gibeonites, which *became mouldy*. Some take the word there in the sense of *crumbling*, so dry that it crumbled into bits. In the present passage however it must mean a sort of cake, perhaps dry baked. The whole of the present which the queen was to take with her was such as a woman of humble position would bring. The traditional interpretation of the Talmud makes the word to mean small cakes about the size of half an egg. The LXX. (*Alex.*) adds as explanatory, that they were for the prophet's children.

and a cruse] The word only occurs here and in Jer. xix. 1, 10, where it is rendered 'bottle'.

he shall tell thee what shall become of the child] It reveals to us a singular condition of mind, when we see the king confident in the prophet's power of foretelling the future even in the case of an individual life, and yet thinking that the queen could go to him with her question and he not know who was making the inquiry.

4. *for his eyes were set*] The same expression is used of Eli, 1 Sam. iv. 15. The idea is of one whose eye has lost its power so that the light no longer acts upon it to enlarge or contract the pupil.

5. *to ask a thing of thee*] The precise expression is not found again. The R.V. gives the rendering 'to inquire', which is most common for the verb, and regards the noun as expository, and so leaves it unrendered. The rendering of the A.V. misrepresents the mission. It was not to ask something for her son, but to inquire concerning him.

thus and thus shalt thou say] The writer, knowing that immediately he will record the conversation, abbreviates his story thus to avoid repeating twice the same words. The same expression is found in Judges xviii. 4.

6. *For I* am *sent to thee* with *heavy* tidings] The LXX. (*Alex.*) rendering, which gives a word for word version of the Hebrew, will explain the italics of the A. V. καὶ ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ἀπόστολος πρός σε σκληρός.

people Israel, and rent the kingdom away from the house of 8
David, and gave it thee; and *yet* thou hast not been as my
servant David, who kept my commandments, and who fol-
lowed me with all his heart, to do *that* only which *was* right
in mine eyes; but hast done evil above all that were before 9
thee: for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and
molten images, to provoke me to anger, and hast cast me
behind thy back: therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon 10
the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam *him*
that pisseth against the wall, *and him that is* shut up and
left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of
Jeroboam, as *a man* taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

9. *but hast done evil above all that were before thee*] This must refer not only to the kings who had preceded Jeroboam, but to the cases of idolatry in the earlier days, e.g. of the Judges. There had been no such instance of sin in the lives of David or of Saul, and Solomon's transgression had been the building of temples and the setting up of images for his strange wives, who were already idolaters.

for thou hast gone] R. V. '**and** thou hast gone'. The conjunction is the simple copulative.

other gods] So certain was the making of an image, even if it was to represent Jehovah, to lead to the introduction of false worship, that God speaks of it as already effected.

and hast cast me behind thy back] An expression indicative of the extremest contempt. It is used Neh. ix. 26 of the whole national sin which led to the captivity, and in Ezek. xxiii. 35, where the prophet is describing the apostasy of Aholibah.

10. *and will cut off*] The entire family is to be exterminated. R.V. 'will cut off from Jeroboam **every man child**'.

and him that is *shut up and left in Israel*] There is no conjunction at the beginning of this phrase, which is used to explain the comprehensiveness of what has gone before. The words are alliterative, and apparently proverbial, in the original. The R.V. has given the sense somewhat more fully: 'him that is shut up and him that is left **at large**'. That is whether a man be young and so under wardship, or older, and free to go about as he pleases. Hence the expression amounts to 'young and old'.

and will take away the remnant] The verb is one that is frequently used of exterminating wickedness and the wicked, but the word translated 'remnant' is only a preposition meaning 'after'. The sense is 'I will clear away after the house of Jeroboam', i.e., not only that they shall be taken away, but all traces of their existence shall be removed. As the verb in the latter clause would be most naturally rendered by 'sweep', the R. V. has translated the whole passage 'and will **utterly sweep away** the house of Jeroboam, as a man **sweepeth away** dung', where 'utterly' gives the force of the literal rendering very well.

11 Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat;
and him that dieth in the field shall the fowls of the air eat:
12 for the LORD hath spoken *it*. Arise thou therefore, get thee
to thine own house: *and* when thy feet enter into the city,
13 the child shall die. And all Israel shall mourn for him, and
bury him: for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave,
because in him there is found *some* good thing toward the
14 LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam. Moreover
the LORD shall raise him up a king over Israel, who shall
cut off the house of Jeroboam that day: but what? even now.
15 For the LORD shall smite Israel, as a reed is shaken in the
water, and he shall root up Israel out of this good land,
which he gave to their fathers, and shall scatter them beyond
the river, because they have made their groves, provoking

11. *shall the dogs eat*] It was this circumstance which rendered it so horrible to the Oriental mind to be cast out unburied. The dogs of an Eastern city were many and devoured all they found.

12. *to thine own house*] There is nothing in the text to represent 'own'. It adds nothing to the sense, and may be omitted.

13. *And all Israel shall mourn for him*] Abijah, though called 'a child' in verses 3, 12 and 17 must have been of such an age as to exhibit qualities that made him beloved of the people. The Hebrew word for 'child' in verses 3 and 17 (not in 12) is the same which Solomon uses of himself in iii. 7 above. See note there.

there is found some *good thing toward the Lord*] Out of this expression has grown the Jewish tradition that Abijah endeavoured, contrary to the wish of his father, to encourage the people to go up to Jerusalem to worship, and removed hindrances that had been put in the way of such journeys. This was his goodness *toward* the Lord.

14. *that day*] i.e. On which the Lord hath appointed: the day when the new king shall arise.

but what? even now] This elliptic phrase seems to be best filled out somewhat thus. But what (am I saying? Why do I speak of that day? It will so soon come to pass that I may call it) even now.

15. *as a reed is shaken*] For this figure of entire instability, cf. Matt. xi. 7 'a reed shaken with the wind'. And here the root is planted amid the water, which will make it more tottering still.

beyond the river] i.e. The River, *par excellence*, the Euphrates.

their groves] R.V. **their Asherim**. This is a plural form of the word Asherah, which is the name of a goddess worshipped with rites similar to those of Baal-worship. The plural probably denotes the wooden images of the goddess, which are mentioned as early as Exod. xxxiv. 13, and the worship of which was common in the time of the Judges (cf. iii. 7), and then for some interval laid aside, but revived under the kings.

the LORD to anger. And he shall give Israel up because of 16
the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to
sin. And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed, and came 17
to Tirzah: *and* when she came to the threshold of the door,
the child died; and they buried him; and all Israel mourned 18
for him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake
by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet. And the 19
rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred, and how he
reigned, behold they *are* written in the book of the chroni-
cles of the kings of Israel. And the days which Jeroboam 20
reigned *were* two and twenty years: and he slept with his
fathers, and Nadab his son reigned in his stead.

16. *and he shall give Israel up*] i.e. Into the hands of their enemies.

who did sin, and who made Israel to sin] It is better with R.V. to take the relative as refering to 'the sin.' Render, **which he hath sinned and wherewith he hath** made Israel to sin.

17. *and came to Tirzah*] This place has not been identified with certainty. It was an ancient city, mentioned first Josh. xii. 24. Its beauty is celebrated in Cant. vi. 4. Jeroboam, as we see here, made it a royal residence, and it was so used, and by some kings as a place of burial, till Omri built Samaria. It was almost certainly on the west of Jordan, and probably not far from the present *Nablous*. The LXX. (*Alex.*) gives εἰς γῆν Σαιρά, on which see xii. 2 additional note.

to the threshold of the door] The Hebrew (as R.V. gives) has 'the threshold of the **house.**'

18. *and they buried him*] The R.V. transposes 'all Israel,' putting it before 'buried,' and thus the sentence assumes an English form. The Hebrew puts 'all Israel' at the end of the clause.

by the hand of] A common Hebrew form for the simple 'by.' Cf. viii. 53 above.

19. *how he warred*] His war with Abijah king of Judah is spoken of in 2 Chron. xiii. 3—20. The history in that place describes Jeroboam's defeat, and the loss of five thousand of his men, and the capture of several Israelite cities by the king of Judah. The wars of Jeroboam with Rehoboam are alluded to below (xv. 6).

20. *two and twenty years*] So that Jeroboam's death occurred in the second year of the reign of Asa, king of Judah. Cf. xv. 9, 25. It appears from 2 Chron. xiii. 20 to have been by some sudden visitation. 'The Lord struck him, and he died.'

Nadab his son] We have only Abijah and Nadab mentioned of Jeroboam's family, but perhaps we may infer from the language of xv. 29, that these were not the whole of his children.

21 And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehoboam *was* forty and one years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city which the LORD did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there. And his mother's name *was* Naamah
22 an Ammonitess. And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had
23 done. For they also built them high places, and images,

21—24. THE SINFUL REIGN OF REHOBOAM IN JUDAH. (2 Chron. xii. 13.)

21. *Rehoboam* was *forty and one years old*] As Solomon's reign lasted forty years (xi. 42), this son must have been born a year or more before his father came to the throne, and Solomon must have married this Ammonitish wife, Naamah, before Pharaoh's daughter. The age of Rehoboam makes it strange that he should have been led by the counsels of young men rather than the elders, as we read in chap. xii., and appears to contradict the words of 2 Chron. xiii. 7, where Rehoboam is described as 'young and tender-hearted' and not able to withstand the rebellion of Jeroboam. Hence the reading of a few MSS. in this passage, of 21 for 41 years, has been thought more probable, though it is not supported either by Josephus or by the narrative of Chronicles (2 Chron. xii. 13). May it not have been that the compilers used different documents and did not try to reconcile them?

the Lord did choose] R.V. 'the Lord **had chosen**.' The choice had been made long before.

his mother's name] The high position and great influence of the queen-mother in Oriental courts accounts for the regular mention of the mother's name in the history of each king's reign. (See above on xi. 19.) This Ammonitish princess must probably have been an idolatress, so that even in his father's time, if the chronology of this verse be correct, the heart of Solomon went after strange women. The R.V. notes that the national designation of this princess has the article '**the** Ammonitess', she was probably well known.

22. *did evil*] R.V. **did that which was evil.** The Hebrew text is better represented by this fuller translation.

provoked him to jealousy] Jehovah had called himself a *jealous* God, when the Law was given on Sinai (Exod. xx. 5).

which they had committed] The word 'had' is better omitted. The Hebrew has no power of marking such a pluperfect tense in verbal inflexions, and the context must be our guide to such a shade of meaning. Here it is not appropriate for the sins were still continuing. In the previous verse the English pluperfect appears preferable as a translation of the same Hebrew tense for the choice of God **had** been made long before the days of Rehoboam.

23. *high places*] We read constantly of 'houses' of the high places,

and groves, on every high hill, and under every green tree.
And there were also sodomites in the land: *and* they did 24
according to all the abominations of the nations which
the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

And it came to pass in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, 25
that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem: and 26
he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD, and
the treasures of the king's house; he even took away all:
and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had
made. And king Rehoboam made in their stead brasen 27
shields, and committed *them* unto the hands of the chief of

and it is to these erections on some lofty hills that the 'building' here spoken of applies. See above, xii. 31.

images] The R.V. renders by **pillars**, with 'obelisks' in the margin. And this appears more correct than A.V. There is nothing in the word itself to denote an image. The root signifies 'to set up,' and this noun is applied to the stones which Jacob set up (Gen. xxviii. 18, xxxi. 45, xxxv. 14), and which Joshua set up (Josh. iv. 9) when the people had passed over Jordan. Probably therefore the erections made in Judah were only large stones. The name is given also to the 'obelisks' which stood at the entrance of the Temple of the Sun in Heliopolis (Jer. xliii. 13).

and groves] R.V. **Ashêrim.** See above on verse 15.

24. *which the Lord cast* (R.V. **drave**) *out*] The change of R.V. brings the expression into harmony with nearly all the rest of the places where this verb occurs. The same alteration is needed in 1 Kings xxi. 26; 2 Kings xvi. 3, xvii. 8, xxi. 2, but has not been made in R.V.

25—31. SHISHAK KING OF EGYPT INVADES JUDAH. DEATH OF REHOBOAM. (2 Chron. xii. 2—4 and 9—16).

25. *Shishak king of Egypt*] See on xi. 40. Shishak is there represented as giving a friendly reception to Jeroboam. It may have been at Jeroboam's prompting that the invasion of Judah was undertaken by him within such a short time after Rehoboam's accession. A monument of this king, the first of the 22nd dynasty, has been discovered at Karnak in Upper Egypt, recording his conquests and the names of certain towns which he had taken in Palestine.

26. *he even took away all*] Instead of these words the LXX. gives: 'and the golden shields which David took from the hands of the servants of Hadadezer king of Zobah and brought them to Jerusalem.' On these captures of David see 2 Sam. viii. 7.

On the shields of gold made by Solomon cf. 1 Kings x. 17. At the close of the verse the LXX. adds that Shishak 'brought' his booty 'into Egypt.'

27. *brasen shields*] R.V. '**shields of brass**' (or, rather, 'bronze')

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28 the guard, which kept the door of the king's house. And
it was *so*, when the king went *into* the house of the LORD,
that the guard bare them, and brought them back into the
29 guard chamber. Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam,
and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the
30 chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war
31 between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all *their* days. And
Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his
fathers in the city of David. And his mother's name *was*
Naamah an Ammonitess. And Abijam his son reigned in
his stead.

15 Now in the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam the son of

which is the form in 2 Chron. xii. 10, and which represents the original more precisely.

chief of the guard] The margin of A.V. gives Heb. *runners*. We see from this that the Cherethites (or Cretans) and Pelethites, of David and Solomon, had disappeared, and that Rehoboam had only native troops, and those much more meanly armed.

28. *And it was* so, *when*] For 'when' the R.V. gives, **as often as**. The Hebrew word is not common. It occurs 1 Sam. xviii. 30; 2 Kings iv. 8; in the latter place the A.V. gives 'as oft as,' and in the former the R.V., has changed 'after' into 'as often as,' with a great improvement to the sense.

30. *all* their *days*] R.V. **continually**: as the same words are rendered in a very similar passage about Saul and David in A.V. 1 Sam. xviii. 29.

31. *and his mother's name—Ammonitess*] These words, which are identical with the closing paragraph of verse 21 are omitted, by the LXX. (*Vat.*). Their occurrence twice so close together seems to shew that the compiler of 1 Kings was drawing from several sources, and that he copied verses 21—24 from one narrative just as they stood, and verses 25—31 from another, which both contained the same piece of information about Rehoboam's mother. Here as in verse 21 we should render '**the** Ammonitess.' In the long passage which the LXX. inserts after verse 24 of chap. xii. (see additional note thereon) she is called Ναανὰν θυγάτηρ Ἄνα υἱοῦ Ναὰς βασιλέως υἱῶν Ἀμμών. The king intended by these words is probably Hanun, the son of Nahash, of whom we hear something in 2 Sam. x. If Hanun became reconciled to David after the events there related, the marriage of Solomon with his daughter might have been one item in their treaty of friendship. But the authority of the addition in the LXX. is not very great.

Abijam his son] Called in 2 Chron. xii. 16, and elsewhere, *Abijah*.

CH. XV. 1—8. ABIJAM, KING OF JUDAH. (2 Chron. xiii. 1—2.)

1. *reigned Abijam over Judah*] Better, with R.V. **began** *Abijam* to reign. This is the sense of the verb here, though in the next verse

Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah. Three years reigned 2
he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Maachah,
the daughter of Abishalom. And he walked in all the sins 3
of his father, which he had done before him: and his heart
was not perfect with the LORD his God, as the heart of
David his father. Nevertheless for David's sake did the 4
LORD his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem, to set up his
son after him, and to establish Jerusalem: because David 5
did *that* which *was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned
not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him all the
days of his life, save only in the matter of Urijah the Hittite.

it must be simply 'reigned.' The A.V. renders it 'began to reign' in verse 25 of this chapter, and elsewhere.

Abijam] The LXX. adds 'son of Rehoboam.' The name is *Abijah* in 2 Chron., and, comparing with other names of like formation, that appears the more correct.

2. *Three years reigned he*] If he began his reign in the eighteenth year of Jeroboam, and was succeeded by Asa (verse 9) in the twentieth year of the same king, the three years cannot have been complete. But this must frequently be noted in the chronological records of the two kingdoms, and imports an element of uncertainty into them.

Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom] In 2 Chron. xiii. 2 Abijah's mother is called 'Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.' But in 2 Chron. xi. 20 it is said that Rehoboam married 'Maachah the daughter of Absalom, which bare him Abijah.' *Abishalom* is only another form of *Absalom* and the person here meant may be the well-known son of David. 'Daughter' is sometimes used for 'grand-daughter. Absalom had one daughter, called Tamar (2 Sam. xiv. 27) who may have married Uriel, and have had a daughter Maachah. The מיכיהו (Michaiah) of 2 Chron. xiii. 2 must then be an error of the scribe for מעכה (Maachah), which is the name found in all other places.

3. *And he walked in all the sins of his father*] The LXX. omits 'all.' For an account of the sins of Rehoboam see above xiv. 22—24.

as the heart of David his father] The LXX. omits 'David.' The word 'perfect' as here applied to David, does not mean that he did not offend, but that he aimed at keeping the law of God, and was deeply penitent for his sin when he fell into it. It was this prompt repentance, and return to what was right, which made David to differ from most of the kings who came after him.

4. *a lamp*] Cf. above on xi. 36. The LXX. gives *κατάλειμμα* here = a remnant, thus expressing the sense of the original, instead of translating. Similarly in xi. 36 the rendering is *θέσις* = a position.

5. *save only in the matter of Urijah the Hittite*] See 2 Sam. xi. 4, 15. This clause is omitted in the LXX. Time would soften down the offence which David committed in numbering the people, so that the compiler of the narrative before us can pass it by in giving expres-

6 And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all
7 the days of his life. Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war
8 between Abijam and Jeroboam. And Abijam slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead.
9 And in the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel
10 reigned Asa over Judah. And forty and one years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Maachah,

sion to the high estimate which was sure to be entertained of the great king David.

6. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam* &c.] The whole of this verse is omitted by the LXX. and it seems altogether out of place in a notice of the reign of Abijam, and has been already inserted [xiv. 30] in the history of Rehoboam, while the parallel statement in reference to Abijam comes in the next verse.

7. *Now* [R.V. **And**] *the rest of the acts of Abijam*] Consisting no doubt principally of the great victory over Jeroboam near mount Zemaraim (2 Chron. xiii. 17) which inflicted so much disaster and loss upon the northern kingdom, that Jeroboam did not recover strength again during Abijam's reign. The source from which the Chronicler drew his additional information about Abijam is called 'the commentary of the prophet Iddo.' (2 Chron. xiii. 22.)

war between Abijam and Jeroboam] Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 11. 2) says Jeroboam despised Abijam because of his youth.

8. *And Abijam slept with his fathers*] To this the LXX. adds 'in the twenty-fourth year of Jeroboam.' This statement does not quite agree with the chronology given in verses 1 and 2 of this chapter, and repeated in 2 Chron. xiii. 1—2. If Abijam came to the throne in the 18th year of Jeroboam and reigned 3 years, his death would fall in the twenty-first year of Jeroboam, or if the three years of his reign were incomplete at the beginning and end it might occur, as is said immediately in verse 9, in the 20th year of Jeroboam.

9—15. ASA KING OF JUDAH. HIS REFORMS. (2 Chron. xiv. 1—5; xv. 16—19.)

9. *In the twentieth year*] The LXX. in accordance with the addition in the previous verse says the 'twenty-fourth.'

reigned Asa] R.V. **began Asa to reign**. See on ver. 1 of this chapter.

10. *And his mother's name* was *Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom*] The most probable explanation of this clause, which is the same as in verse 2 above, is that the word 'mother' is here used for 'grandmother,' and that Asa's own mother sank into small importance in comparison with her mother-in-law. Clearly Maachah was a leader of the idol worship in the land, which made it necessary for Asa to deprive

the daughter of Abishalom. And Asa did *that* which *was* 11
right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* David his father. And 12
he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed
all the idols that his fathers had made. And also Maachah 13
his mother, even her he removed from *being* queen, because
she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her
idol, and burnt *it* by the brook Kidron. But the high places 14

her of her influence. On the power wielded in the East by a queen-mother, see ii. 19 note. The LXX. (*Vat.*) gives 'Ana' as the name of Asa's mother, and not 'Maachah,' but this is not supported by any other evidence.

12. *and he took* (R. V. **put**) *away*] The same word is so rendered in 2 Chron. xv. 8, of these very reforms. Literally it means 'caused to pass by.'

idols that his fathers had made] Not only those in Judah and Benjamin, but also those that were set up in the hill country of Ephraim, in the cities which Abijam had taken from Jeroboam.

13. *And also Maachah*] Here, as above, the LXX. has *Ana*.

his mother, even her he removed] The R. V. omits 'even her'. The Hebrew has this construction, but it is Hebrew, not English, though like several other Hebrew idioms, it has become accepted, through the influence of the A.V.

from being *queen*] i.e. From the influential position of queen mother. The title is not the usual word for 'queen' but one which implies special authority and influence.

she had made an idol in a grove] R. V. 'had made **an abominable image for an Asherah**.' The word which the A. V. renders 'idol' is one of the numerous terms which the Hebrew language applied to the objects of idolatrous worship. It is cognate with words which signify 'horror,' 'trembling,' 'fearfulness,' and indicates an erection which was likely to excite such feelings. On 'Asherah,' which is used sometimes for the goddess, sometimes for the idol set up to represent her, see above on xiv. 15.

and Asa destroyed her idol] R. V. **cut down her image**. The verb indicates the manner of the destruction, and shews that the image was such that it could be cut down as you would cut down a tree. Hence most likely it was of wood, for in the next clause we find that it was burnt.

by the brook Kidron] This was rather a valley or torrent bed, which became a stream in the time of rain. It was close to Jerusalem, lying between the city and the mount of Olives. The name is connected with several events which mark it as a spot of evil fame. Beside the burning there of these idols, it was at this place that Athaliah was put to death (2 Kings xi. 16), and hither in after times many impure objects of worship and abominations were brought to be destroyed (2 Kings xxiii. 4, 6, 12; 2 Chron. xxix. 16, xxx. 14).

14. *But the high places were not removed*] R. V. **taken away**. The change is made that this passage may be rendered in the same

were not removed: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with
15 the LORD all his days. And he brought in *the things* which his father had dedicated, and *the things* which himself had dedicated, *into* the house of the LORD, silver, and gold, and vessels.
16 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of
17 Israel all their days. And Baasha king of Israel went up

way as 2 Chron. xv. 17, with which it is identical. In Judah (we are told 2 Chron. xiv. 5) Asa did take away the high places, but in Israel (2 Chron. xv. 17) they were not taken away. The mention of this as something which Asa might have been expected to effect shews that the conquests of his father and himself had given them much control (or influence) over the affairs of the northern kingdom. As the high places had been long tolerated, and the worship offered there had been accepted we can see how much more difficult it would be to put down this form of worship than any of the others. Hence, in spite of the continuance of the high places, Asa's heart is said to have been 'perfect with the Lord.' The worship on the high places was long kept up. They are mentioned again 1 Kings xxii. 44; 2 Kings xii. 3, xiv. 4, xv. 4, 35.

15. *And he brought in* the things *which* [R. V. **that**] *his father had dedicated, and* the things *which* [R. V. **that**] *himself had dedicated*] These apparently trivial changes of the R. V. are made so that this passage may be in accord with the identical passage in 2 Chron. xv. 18.

Here a commencement was made to supply the place of all those treasures which Shishak had carried off in the reign of Rehoboam. The silver and gold and vessels were no doubt the booty which had been taken from some conquered enemies. That it was customary thus to dedicate the booty or tribute of conquered and subject peoples we see from 2 Sam. viii. 11, where David dedicates silver and gold taken from all the nations he had subdued. And it was not a custom confined to the Hebrews, for we are told (Ezra i. 7) that Nebuchadnezzar put into 'the house of his gods' those vessels of the house of the Lord which he had brought away from Jerusalem.

into the house of the Lord] These words the R. V. places after 'brought,' for the same reason which dictated the other slight changes in the verse.

16—24. ASA'S WAR WITH BAASHA. HIS DEATH. (2 Chron. xvi. 1—6, 11—14.)

16. *between Asa and Baasha*] Baasha obtained the throne of Israel in the third year of Asa's reign (1 Kings xv. 33) and reigned twenty-four years. So Asa was king all through Baasha's reign. Hence 'all their days' implies the whole of Baasha's reign.

17. *went up against Judah and built Ramah*] This act of Baasha's shews us that Israel must by this time have recovered some of the

against Judah, and built Ramah, that *he* might not suffer *any* to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. Then Asa 18
took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants: and king Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus, saying, *There is* a league between me and thee, *and* between 19
my father and thy father: behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold; come *and* break thy league with

power and territory which had been taken from them in Jeroboam's reign (2 Chron. xiii. 19). Ramah, though lying in the hill country of Ephraim, was among the places allotted to the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 25), so that it must have been very near to Jerusalem, and to make a fortress of it, as Baasha was now doing, was like making a blockade of Jerusalem, a condition which is described in the words which immediately follow.

18. *Ben-hadad, the son of Tabrimon* [R. V. **Tabrimmon**] *the son of Hezion, king of Syria*] This is the earliest of the three kings of this name mentioned in the Old Testament. 'Hezion' is probably the same person as the 'Rezon,' king of Damascus mentioned in 1 Kings xi. 23, and Ben-hadad I. was apparently his grandson. We cannot always determine whether the names of these kings are merely significant titles, or true names. 'Hadad' was a Syrian god, perhaps the sun-god, and Ben-hadad, 'son of Hadad' may mean one devoted to Hadad's worship. So 'Tab-rimmon' signifies 'good is Rimmon'; Rimmon being another Syrian divinity (see 2 Kings v. 18). This is much more likely to be a personal name than Ben-hadad. The war which Ben-hadad now began against Israel appears to have been continued in the days of Ahab. See below xx. 1. In the LXX. this king is called *υἱὸς Ἀδερ*.

19. There is *a league*] There is, as the italics of A. V. shew, no verb expressed in the original. The LXX. supplies the imperative *διάθου*=make. This the R. V. represents on the margin by 'Let there be.' But the concluding words of the clause seem to point to the indicative as the more suitable insertion. What Asa desires to claim is a sort of hereditary alliance, which he would best do by treating the friendship as existing and of long standing. As there was no war between Asa and Ben-hadad, the one might very naturally write to the other in brotherly language, according to the custom of monarchs.

come [R. V. **go**] and *break thy league with Baasha*] The R. V. more strictly represents the Hebrew by omitting the italic 'and,' and brings the verse into agreement with 2 Chron. xvi. 3 where the same words stand in the original. As Israel lay nearer to Damascus than did Judah, any places won from the northern kingdom would be easily included in the Syrian kingdom. Hence beside the costly

20 Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me. So
Ben-hadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains
of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, and
smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cin-
21 neroth, with all the land of Naphtali. And it came to pass,
when Baasha heard *thereof*, that he left off building of
22 Ramah, and dwelt in Tirzah. Then king Asa made a pro-
clamation throughout all Judah; none *was* exempted: and

presents, Benhadad might see other gain in forming an alliance with Asa against Israel.

that he may depart from me] As he would naturally do to repel an invasion on the northern frontier.

20. *So* [R.V. **And**] *Ben-hadad hearkened*] The conjunction is the simple copulative, and is so rendered in the parallel place in Chronicles.

the captains of the hosts which he had] This is an attempt to represent the Hebrew construction. But it is not nearly so idiomatic as the translation in Chronicles which the R.V. has followed, that the same Hebrew might have in both places the same English rendering: **the captains of his armies.**

and smote Ijon] This town lay in the north of Palestine and belonged to the tribe of Naphtali. It was attacked and plundered again in later days by Tiglath-pileser (2 Kings xv. 29).

and Dan] This was the town formerly called Laish, which had been seized in the days of the Judges by some Danites from the south (Joshua xix. 47; Judges xviii. 29). It lay on the extreme north of the country, so that 'from Dan to Beersheba' became an expression to describe the whole country from north to south.

and Abel-beth-maachah] This city, like the rest, lay quite in the north, and was early a place of some importance. It is called 'a city and a mother in Israel' (2 Sam. xx. 19). In the parallel passage in Chronicles the name is given as 'Abel-maim,' i.e. 'Abel on the waters.'

all Cinneroth] R.V. **Chinneroth.** From the way in which it is here mentioned this appears to have been a district and not a town. It was probably named from the lake of Gennesareth, or sea of Tiberias, which was in that neighbourhood, and was anciently called 'the sea of Chinnereth' (Numb. xxiv. 11; Josh. xiii. 27).

Naphtali] This tribe lay directly in the way of Syrian and Assyrian invaders.

21. *he left off building of Ramah*] Thus releasing Jerusalem from its blockade, as Asa desired. In Chronicles it is said 'he let his work cease.'

Tirzah] A royal residence before this time. See on xiv. 17.

22. *Asa made a proclamation throughout* [R.V. **unto**] *all Judah*] Literally 'caused all Judah to hear.' The people, rather than the land, are spoken of, as is shewn by the next words 'none was ex-

they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, where*with* Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah. The rest of all the 23
acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the

empted.' The whole labouring population was gathered on the king's requisition that the work might be completed while the pressure of the Syrians on the north was being sharply felt.

and they took [R.V. carried] *away the stones of Ramah*] As in many previous instances R.V. takes the rendering from Chronicles, but only that the two may be made alike where the original is the same. The king of Israel had intended to make a great fortress out of Ramah. Hence there was prepared an immense quantity of stone and wood for his fortifications. This is what is meant by 'building' in this whole passage. Ramah was to have been 'fortified', and the materials sufficed to fortify Geba and Mizpah for Judah.

built with them] R.V. built therewith. As in Chronicles.

Geba of Benjamin] Geba (signifying 'a hill') was on the extreme north of the kingdom of Judah, which is described (2 Kings xxiii. 8) as extending 'from Geba to Beersheba.' It is mentioned among the Benjamite towns (Josh. xxi. 17), and was one of those allotted to the priests.

Mizpah] The word signifies 'a pillar' and is the name given to several places in the Holy Land. The town spoken of in this verse is the 'Mizpah of Benjamin,' within a mile or two of Gibeah. The LXX. translates both Geba and Mizpah, giving *πᾶν βουνὸν Βενιαμὶν καὶ τὴν σκοπιάν.*

23. *The rest of all the acts of Asa*] There is a conjunction at the opening of the verse in the original. Hence R.V. Now the rest &c.

The reign of Asa is dealt with more fully in the book of Chronicles. Beside what is told in Kings, we learn there that he built fenced cities in Judah, because the land had rest and no war. His army is described as consisting of 300,000 men of Judah and 280,000 of Benjamin. He defeated Zerah the Ethiopian, who came against him in battle, and with the help of God drove him back as far as Gerar. A prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded encouraged the king to put down idolatry with a strong hand, and he bound his people by a solemn oath to cleave unto the Lord, and those who would not do so he put to death. Asa, we are told, was rebuked by Hanani the prophet after the withdrawal of Baasha, because he had relied on the help of the king of Syria, and he was told that from henceforth he should have wars. In anger Asa imprisoned the unwelcome prophet, and oppressed some of his people at the same time. The long reign of this king was manifestly an active time, both in the religious and political life of Judah.

the cities which he built] No doubt these are 'the fenced cities' spoken of in 2 Chron. xiv. 6, as built during the days of peace.

chronicles of the kings of Judah? Nevertheless in the time
24 of his old age he was diseased in his feet. And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead.

25 And Nadab the son of Jeroboam *began* to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned
26 over Israel two years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin
27 wherewith he made Israel to sin. And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him;

Nevertheless] R.V. **But.** The A.V. would make it seem as though the successes described in the early part of the verse ought to have been enough to prevent the disease here mentioned.

diseased in his feet] In 2 Chron. xvi. 12 it is added 'until his disease was exceeding great', and then as another token of his weakened trust in God the chronicler continues 'yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.'

24. *and was buried with his fathers*] There is much more detail concerning the burial in 2 Chron. xvi. 14, 'They buried him in his own sepulchres, which he had made for himself in the city of David, and laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours and divers kinds of spices prepared by the apothecaries' art, and they made a very great burning for him.' At the funerals of the great it was the custom to burn beds and clothes, spices and other things (see Jer. xxiv. 5). In T. B. *Abodah Zarah* 11 a it is said: 'when Rabban Gamaliel the elder died, Onkelos the proselyte burned in his honour the worth of 70 minæ of Tyrian money.'

25—30. NADAB KING OF ISRAEL. BAASHA SLAYS HIM, AND ALL THAT BELONG TO JEROBOAM. (Not in Chronicles.)

25. *reigned over Israel two years*] These must have been but portions of two years. Nadab's reign began in the second year of Asa, and below (verse 31) we find that his successor began to reign in the third year of Asa.

26. *he did evil*] R.V. (as always for this definite expression) **he did that which was evil.** Nadab followed the same worship of the calves which his father had introduced. This was a most insidious fashion of idolatry, for it did not disown Jehovah, only acted against His law in making a representation for purposes of worship.

27. *of the house of Issachar*] Jeroboam's family was of the tribe of Ephraim (xi. 26), and it may have been some tribal jealousy which led a man of Issachar to exterminate the whole family of Jeroboam, and to found a new dynasty. From the message of the prophet Jehu to Baasha (xvi. 1—2) it would appear as if Baasha's attempt had been sanctioned

and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon, which *belongeth* to the Philistines; for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon.
28 Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.
29 And it came to pass, when he reigned, *that* he smote all the house of Jeroboam; he left not to Jeroboam any that breathed, until *he* had destroyed him, according unto the saying of the LORD, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite:
30 because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation where*with* he provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.
31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

by some divine message. But none the more did Baasha improve upon the conduct of the two kings of the previous house.

at Gibbethon, which belongeth [R.V. **belonged**] *to the Philistines*] Scrivener's edition of 1611 reads *belongeth*. This was a town allotted originally to the tribe of Dan (Josh. xix. 44), and was given as a Levitical city to the Kohathites (Josh. xxi. 23), but it had been by this time taken by the Philistines, and Nadab was endeavouring to drive them out. The verb *belongeth* is only indicated by the preposition which is prefixed to the word *Philistines*, and we need not understand more by it than occupation such as conquerors take.

all Israel laid siege] R.V. **were laying siege**. The work was still in progress, and was not completed even in Baasha's reign. Cf. xvi. 15.

29. *when he reigned*, that *he smote*] R.V. **that as soon as he was king he smote**. Being an usurper he would desire to make his power secure by removing at once everyone who might become a rival. This is expressed in the original, and the R.V. seems to bring it out fully. Thus God used the policy of Baasha to fulfil the prophecy against Jeroboam.

by his servant] The Hebrew says **by the hand of his servant**, and as this mode of expression is not uncommon in the Old Testament, the R.V. has given the full form. For the threat against Jeroboam and the reason, see xiv. 9—11.

30. *because of* [R.V. **for**] *the sins*] In xiv. 16, words very like this clause are found, but the preposition there is a strong compound word, and 'because of' was there left as the translation. Here the original gives another and lighter preposition. Hence the seemingly unnecessary change, by which however the English reader is made to notice a difference of the Hebrew.

by [R.V. **because of**] *his provocation*] Cf. Deut. xxxii. 19; 2 Kings xxiii. 26.

32 And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of
33 Israel all their days. In the third year of Asa king of Judah
began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in
34 Tirzah, twenty and four years. And he did evil in the sight
of the LORD, and walked in the way of Jeroboam and in
16 his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin. Then the word of
the LORD came to Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha,
2 saying, Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust, and
made thee prince over my people Israel; and thou hast
walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people
3 Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins; behold,

XV. 32—XVI. 7. BAASHA KING OF ISRAEL. GOD'S MESSAGES TO HIM BY THE PROPHET JEHU. (Not in Chronicles.)

32. *And there was war*] The LXX. (*Vat.*) omits this verse entirely.

33. *in Tirzah, twenty and four years*] To complete the sense the R.V. inserts in italics after 'Tirzah' the words '*and reigned*.'

Tirzah seems to have become by this time a more common royal residence than Shechem. Perhaps its extreme beauty attracted the kings and their families. Cf. Sol. Song vi. 4, 'Thou art beautiful as Tirzah'.

34. *evil*] R.V. **that which was evil.** See above on verse 26, xvi. 1.

XVI. **1.** *Then* [R. V. **and**] *the word of the Lord came*] The conjunction is the simple copula, and this verse is in close connexion with the closing sentence of the previous chapter.

Jehu the son of Hanani] This prophet, named in this chapter and in 2 Chron xix. 2, xx. 34, was the son of that prophet Hanani who rebuked Asa (2 Chron. xvi 7—10) for his alliance with the Syrians against Baasha. Jehu seems to have lived in Jerusalem, though his prophetical ministry was mainly directed to the kingdom of Israel. He rebuked Jehoshaphat king of Judah for his alliance with Ahab, and must have outlived Jehoshaphat, as a history of that king's reign is said (2 Chron. xx. 34) to be contained in this prophet's writings. Jehu must therefore have begun his labours as a prophet at an early age.

2. *I exalted thee out of the dust*] This may signify that Baasha was of humble origin; but to be chosen of God and called to the position of a ruler of Israel was great exaltation out of any station.

prince over my people] Though Israel has offended, they are still God's people. They have rejected His law, but He does not reject them. From the house of Baasha there was expected to come some amendment of the evil ways of Jeroboam.

to provoke me to anger with their sins] For the last three words the LXX. gives ἐν τοῖς ματαίοις αὐτῶν, 'with their vanities;' a common form of expression in similar phrases. See below, verse 13.

I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house; and will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. Him that dieth of Baasha in 4
the city shall the dogs eat; and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat. Now the rest of the 5
acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Baasha slept with his fathers, and was buried in Tirzah: 6
and Elah his son reigned in his stead. And also by the 7
hand of the prophet Jehu the son of Hanani came the word of the LORD against Baasha, and against his house, even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam; and because he killed him.

In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah *began* 8

3. *I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house*] R.V. **I will utterly sweep away Baasha and his house.** Here we have precisely the same expression as in the closing words of xiv. 10, where the A.V. rendered 'take away the remnant.' See note there.

6. *So* [R.V. **And**] *Baasha slept with his fathers*] He had reigned not quite twenty-four full years. Cf. xv. 33 with xvi. 8. Tirzah was now sufficiently distinguished to be made a burial place by the kings of Israel.

7. *And also* [R.V. **moreover**] *by the hand of the prophet Jehu*] 'Moreover' connects the two prophetic messages more directly than the 'also' of A.V. The LXX. omits the words 'the prophet.'

even for (R.V. **both because of**] *all the evil*] There are two reasons given for the divine message sent to Baasha. They are both prefaced by the same preposition in the original = *because*, and it makes the verse clearer if the same word be used in both clauses in the translation.

and because he killed [R.V. **smote**] *him*] The R.V. gives on the margin 'it' for 'him.' The reference must be to Jeroboam and his house. God had raised up Baasha, and sent him against Jeroboam, but it is clear from this verse that the manner in which punishment had been inflicted by Baasha was not such as God approved of. We may compare with this the language of Isaiah (xlvii. 6) where God by the mouth of His prophet declares His wrath against His people, and how He delivered them into the hand of the king of Babylon, but at the same time shews His anger with the conqueror for the way in which he had exercised cruelty; "Thou didst shew them no mercy."

The R.V. has rendered the verb 'smote' because it is so rendered in xv. 27, 29, about the destruction of Jeroboam and of his house.

8—14. ELAH KING OF ISRAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *In the twenty and sixth year of Asa king of Judah began*]

Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two
9 years. And his servant Zimri, captain of half *his* chariots,
conspired against him, as he *was* in Tirzah, drinking *himself*
drunk *in* the house of Arza steward of *his* house in Tirzah.
10 And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him, in the
twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned
11 in his stead. And it came to pass, when he *began* to reign,
as soon as he sat on the throne, *that* he slew all the house
of Baasha: he left him not *one that* pisseth against a wall,
12 neither *of* his kinsfolks, nor *of* his friends. Thus did Zimri
destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of
the LORD, which he spake against Baasha by Jehu the pro-
13 phet, for all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son,
by which they sinned, and *by* which they made Israel to sin,
in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their

These words, like most other chronological dates, are omitted by the LXX.

in Tirzah, two years] Here as in xv. 33 the R.V. inserts in italics after 'Tirzah' the words *and reigned*, which makes the sense clearer.

9. *And his servant Zimri*] The LXX. omits 'his servant.' The expression is used of any officer who served under the king, and has no mean signification. Here 'the servant' was a chief commander of the royal troops.

as [**now** R.V.] *he was in Tirzah*] The strongest stop in the Hebrew occurs immediately before these words. It is therefore well to make them, in the English also, to begin a new clause.

Arza steward of his *house*] R.V. (see also A.V. margin): **Arza which was over the household.** Cf. for a similar officer over the household of Joseph, Gen. xliii. 16, 19. It would almost seem that this *major domo* was mixed up in the plot for the murder of his master. The opportunity of the absence of the troops at Gibbethon would seem very favourable for carrying out such a scheme.

10. *in the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah*] Omitted as usual by the LXX. Here again if we refer to verse 8, it is plain that Elah's two years cannot have been full years.

11. that *he slew*] R.V. **smote.** The verb is the same that is constantly so rendered in all these descriptions. Zimri made a complete end, he left not a single man child.

he left...house of Baasha] All this passage is left out by the LXX.

13. by *which they sinned, and* by *which they made*] R.V. **which they sinned and wherewith they made**, as in other places. The LXX. has nothing to represent 'by which they sinned.'

vanities] This word is often employed in the Old Testament of false gods, and the worship paid to them. The idea is that such a deity is nothing, and such prayers can have no result.

vanities. Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he 14
did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the
kings of Israel?

In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah 15
did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah. And the people *were*
encamped against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philis-
tines. And the people that *were* encamped heard say, 16
Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king: where-
fore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over
Israel that day in the camp. And Omri went up from Gib- 17
bethon, and all Israel with him, and they besieged Tirzah.
And it came to pass, when Zimri saw that the city was taken, 18
that he went into the palace of the king's house, and burnt
the king's house over him with fire, and died, for his sins 19
which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, in

15—20. ZIMRI KING OF ISRAEL. OMRI PROCLAIMED KING BY THE ARMY. (Not in Chronicles.)

15. *In the twenty and seventh year of Asa king of Judah*] The chronological note is omitted by the LXX.

And [R.V. **Now**] *the people* were *encamped against Gibbethon*] The LXX. explains 'the people' by ἡ παρεμβολή = the camp. It was, of course, only the army and camp-followers who were away in the land of the Philistines. Apparently the attempt to wrest Gibbethon from the Philistines had continued from the time of Nadab. But the vicissitudes of the northern kingdom had been many, and such as to hinder the prosecution of any campaign.

16. *heard say*] The distance was not great between Tirzah and Gibbethon, and it was to the army that such news would quickly be brought.

hath also slain] R.V. **smitten.** The change is made for consistency.

wherefore all Israel] The voice of the army being regarded as the voice of the nation. So 'all Israel' is used in the next verse.

Omri, the captain of the host] Omri was manifestly in chief command at Gibbethon, and though Zimri was also a military officer, yet he had not, it would seem, the popularity of Omri.

17. *and they besieged Tirzah*] Which must therefore have been a fortified town, and not a mere pleasance of the kings of Israel.

18. *the palace* [R.V. **castle**] *of the king's house*] The word is most frequently rendered 'palace' in A.V.; but here and in 2 Kings xv. 25, the sense required is some strong and well barricaded part of the royal residence, where any one might retire and the enemy be unable to reach him. The root of the noun is probably a verb implying 'height.'

19. *in doing evil*] See on xv. 34. There must have been in Zimri's conduct some very prominent acts to indicate adhesion to the worship of the calves; otherwise in a reign of seven days he would hardly have been coupled with Jeroboam as leading the people into sin. Perhaps

walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he
20 did, to make Israel sin. Now the rest of the acts of Zimri,
and his treason that he wrought, *are* they not written in the
book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?
21 Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts:
half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make
22 him king; and half followed Omri. But the people that
followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed
Tibni the son of Ginath: so Tibni died, and Omri reigned.
23 In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah *began* Omri
to reign over Israel, twelve years: six years reigned he in
24 Tirzah. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for

he endeavoured to win popularity in this way, so as to have on his side the bulk of the nation before the action of the army in the field became known.

did make Israel sin] R.V. **to sin.** There can be no reason for varying a phrase so stereotyped as this.

21—28. TWO PARTIES IN ISRAEL. OMRI'S FOLLOWERS PREVAIL. REIGN OF OMRI, AND THE BUILDING OF SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

21. *divided into two parts*] Probably it was the civil population, which at first followed Zimri, and after his death, Tibni, while the military strength declared for their commander-in-chief Omri.

half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath] Of Tibni we have no information but what is to be gathered from this passage. Comparing the date of Omri's accession in verse 23, viz. the 31st year of Asa, with that of Zimri's death in the 27th year of the same king (see verse 15) we find that the struggle between the two parties was continued for four years.

22. *so Tibni died*] Here the LXX. says 'and Thamni died and his brother Joram at that time, and Ambri reigned after Thamni.' This is one of those additions which can hardly have arisen except from the existence of a different Hebrew text.

23. *over Israel, twelve years*] The R.V. inserts in italics '*and reigned*,' after 'Israel' to make the sense clear. See on xv. 33.

six years reigned he] The four years of the struggle for the throne are not counted either to Tibni or to Omri. For the commencement of Ahab's reign is put (see verse 29) in the 38th year of Asa.

24. *the hill Samaria*] This is the first historic mention of the place which subsequently became famous as the chief city in Israel, and gave name to a people and a district. Where the word occurs in 1 Kings xiii. 32, it is a later writer who is using, before its proper date, a name which to him and his readers was perfectly familiar. (See note there.) Samaria is the Greek form of the name, but the derivation from 'Shemer,'

two talents of silver, and built *on* the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria. But Omri wrought evil in the 25
eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him. For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of 26
Nebat, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger with their vanities. Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his 27
might that he shewed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Omri slept with 28
his fathers, and was buried in Samaria: and Ahab his son reigned in his stead.

And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa king of Judah 29
began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel: and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty and

the former owner, becomes apparent if the word be written in its Hebrew form 'Shomeron.'

The LXX. inserts 'the owner of the hill' after the first mention of Shemer in this verse, as well as after the second; also it reads 'and he called the name *of the mountain where* he built' instead of the exact rendering of the Hebrew as in A.V.

25. *But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord*] R.V. **and Omri did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.** Thus translating as in other passages.

and did worse than] R. V. **and dealt wickedly above.** Cf. 2 Kings xxi. 11.

26. *in his sin* [R.V. **sins**]. In the Hebrew text there is a various reading, the margin (*Keri*) having the singular, the text (*Kethib*) the plural, which the R.V. always translates where it can be done.

28. At the close of this verse the LXX. inserts words almost identical with chap. xxii. 41—50, about the accession and the acts of Jehoshaphat. The only variation worth noting is that it is said that Jehoshaphat began to reign in the *eleventh year of Omri*, whereas in xxii. 41, the date of his accession is given as the *fourth year of Ahab*. And this latter date the LXX. gives in xxii., where, with this change, the passage is inserted once more.

29—33. AHAB KING OF ISRAEL. HIS EXCESS OF WICKEDNESS. (Not in Chronicles.)

29. *And in the thirty and eighth year of Asa*] Here the LXX. gives 'in the second year of Jehoshaphat.' This is in harmony with the inserted passage just noticed, but of course disagrees with the date in xxii. 41 both in the LXX. itself and in the Hebrew text.

and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel] These words are omitted by the LXX.: as are the words 'the son of Omri' in the next verse.

30 two years. And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight
31 of the LORD above all that *were* before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took *to* wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and
32 went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal *in* the house of Baal, which he had built
33 in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more

31. *as if it had been a light thing*] i.e. He was unwarned by all the visitations which had befallen the kings before him for their worship of the calves. He went further than this and introduced the worship of a false god into the land.

he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians] It was perhaps the taste for building, which manifested itself both in Omri and in Ahab, that brought them into closer alliance with Zidon; but no doubt an intercourse had been kept up ever since the days of Solomon between the two nations. But this marriage of Ahab was most fatal both to Israel and Judah. The family of Jezebel were devoted to the worship of Baal and Astarte. Josephus (cont. Apion. I. 18) mentions Eithobalus (i.e. Ethbaal) as 'the priest of Astarte' as well as king, and Pygmalion and Dido as being contemporaries of Jezebel. There was therefore great vigour in the race, and when Jezebel became queen of Israel she ruled her husband and the nation, and established the worship to which her family was so devoted. After the death of her husband, as queen-mother, she maintained her influence in the court of her son, and through her daughter Athaliah, who was married to the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, she wrought much evil in the southern kingdom and all but exterminated the royal race. The doings of Jezebel form a great part of the history till her death, which is related in 2 Kings ix. The various scenes in which she appears and the evil influence which she exercised will be best noticed as the history goes on.

went and served Baal] This was very different from the sin of Solomon who out of indulgence to his foreign wives permitted temples for their gods to be set up in his land, but himself took no share in the idolatrous worship. Jezebel had a greater and worse influence over Ahab.

32. in *the house of Baal*] The LXX. renders by ἐν οἴκῳ τῶν προσοχθισμάτων αὐτοῦ = in the house of his abominations. This is after the fashion of the Jews who preferred to use the word 'bosheth' = *shame*, rather than the name 'Baal' when the latter could be avoided. Cf. the names 'Ishbosheth' and 'Mephibosheth' which are instead of 'Eshbaal' and 'Meribbaal.'

33. *And Ahab made a grove*] R.V. **the Ashêrah.** That is, the image which was to represent the female divinity, of which Baal was the male.

to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.

In his days did Hiel the Bethelite build Jericho: he laid 34
the foundation thereof in Abiram his firstborn, and set up the gates thereof in his youngest *son* Segub, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun.

to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger] Here the LXX. adds 'and that his soul should be destroyed.'

34. THE REBUILDING OF JERICHO. (Not in Chronicles.)

34. *Hiel the Bethelite*] We may perhaps trace the influence here of evil surroundings. Hiel had been living at one of the seats of Jeroboam's calf-worship, and the neglect of one command had led to ignorance or disregard of another.

did...build Jericho] As the kings, Omri and Ahab, were great builders, so their wealthier subjects were led to imitate their grand works. For the command that Jericho should not be rebuilt, see Josh. vi. 26. The importance of the place lay no doubt in its neighbourhood to the passage of the Jordan, and at a time when commerce was much fostered this advantage was likely to outweigh, with such men, the prohibition which had been given so many generations before, and would be now reckoned as obsolete.

in Abiram] R.V. with the loss of Abiram. The R.V. explains the literal rendering of A.V. The preposition is used to express the cost or price of anything, and so here the penalty which Hiel paid for his transgression. The same change is also made in the second clause of the verse. The meaning is that between the beginning and the end of the undertaking all Hiel's children were cut off.

by Joshua] The Hebrew has 'by the hand of Joshua,' as in so many other places where a message is in question.

CHAP. XVII. 1—7. ELIJAH THE TISHBITE. HIS PROPHECY OF A DROUGHT AND ITS FULFILMENT. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *And Elijah the Tishbite*] Elijah comes suddenly upon the scene and throughout the history his appearances are rare, sudden and brief. His history is most probably drawn from some independent narrative of the work of the prophets, and introduced here abruptly as soon as it begins to touch upon the reign of Ahab. The schools of the prophets seem to have had their origin in Samuel's day, and were founded in various parts of the land, and in connexion with them Elijah appears in Israel. He is called the Tishbite because he was born at Thisbe in the tribe of Naphtali, a place known afterwards as the birthplace of Tobit (Tobit i. 2). Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 13, 2) says he was ἐκ πόλεως Θεσβώνης τῆς Γαλααδίτιδος χώρας, as if his birthplace had been in Gilead. For the connected history of Elijah, the student would do well to consult Mr (now Sir Geo.) Grove's Article, *Elijah*, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*.

17 And Elijah the Tishbite, *who was* of the inhabitants of
Gilead, said unto Ahab, *As* the LORD God of Israel liveth,
before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these
2 years, but according to my word. And the word of the
3 LORD came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee
eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that *is*

who was *of the inhabitants* [R.V. **sojourners**] *of Gilead*] The Hebrew noun is found frequently in the phrase 'a stranger and sojourner,' cf. Gen. xxiii. 4; Lev. xxv. 35, 47; and does not imply that the person spoken of was a native of the place mentioned thus. Hence there is no difficulty in understanding that Elijah, a native of the tribe of Naphtali, was a dweller for a time in Gilead. Such a man was likely to retire from the world and dwell alone among the mountain fastnesses. The Fathers (Epiphanius, Dorotheus, Isidore) represent Elijah as of a priestly family, but there is no warrant for the statement.

As the Lord God of Israel liveth] Elijah prefaces his message with his authority. He does not come in his own name, nor will the drought be of his bringing. He is but sent as the bearer of Jehovah's word, the word of Him whom Israel had forsaken, but who alone was worthy to be called the Living God.

but according to my word] i.e. As God shall proclaim through me; cf. xviii. 41, 44. Josephus, having in mind the disappearance of Elijah after this message and his reappearance to Ahab before the coming of the rain, makes the prophet say that there should be no rain 'except on his appearance' *εἰ μὴ φανέντος αὐτοῦ*. He also states that this drought is mentioned by Menander in his history of Ethbaal, the king of the Tyrians. It endured, he says, for a whole year, but after that time, on the king's earnest prayer, there came down abundant thunder showers. In Luke iv. 25 and James v. 17, the duration of the drought in Israel is said to have been three years and six months. By such long-continued want of rain there the neighbouring countries must also have been affected.

The LXX. rendering *εἰ μὴ διὰ στόματος λόγου μου*, is a literal translation of the Hebrew.

2. *came unto him*] The LXX. explains that it was 'unto Elijah,' which could hardly be doubted from what follows.

3. *and hide thyself*] The prophet's life would be in danger from the anger of the king and Jezebel, who would consider Elijah not merely the announcer but the cause of the drought.

by the brook Cherith, that is *before Jordan*] The rendering gives a fair representation of what was commanded, but the word rendered 'brook' is נחל *nahal*, which is really a torrent-bed, a deep ravine down which in rainy times a strong stream flowed, but which at others was nearly if not entirely dry. Such would make a good hiding-place. The situation of Cherith has not been identified. Josephus gives no form of the name, only saying that Elijah stayed *παρὰ χειμάρρῳ τινί*='by a certain torrent-bed.' Nor does the description 'that is before Jordan'

before Jordan. And it shall be, *that* thou shalt drink of the 4
brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.
So he went and did according unto the word of the LORD: 5
for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that *is* before
Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in 6
the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he
drank of the brook. And it came to pass after a while, that 7
the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the
land.

help us. It probably implies that the stream from the ravine emptied itself into the Jordan, and hence the valley looked towards the river. But whether on the west side or the east we cannot tell. If the interview with Ahab was in Samaria, and Elijah travelled thence toward the east (Josephus says in contradiction of the text 'towards the south') it appears most likely that he crossed the Jordan, and found his retreat in the wilder parts of Gilead, which would be more distant from Ahab and less frequented than any of the ravines in the hill country of Ephraim on the west of Jordan, and with which the prophet would most likely be familiar.

4. *thou shalt drink of the brook*] The drought had not yet dried it up, but soon it would do so.

I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there] Just as in xiii. 28 the appetite of the lion which had slain the false prophet was supernaturally checked, so that he tare neither the corpse nor the ass, so here the greedy birds were to bring into the valley enough food to suffice for the prophet's wants as well as for their own. Their nests would be in the caves among which Elijah would find his best hiding-place. Many attempts have been made to explain away this verse by putting different vowel points to the word עֹרְבִים to interpret it as (1) *merchants*. This some Jews favoured as the raven was an unclean bird. But it is answer sufficient to this, that Elijah was not told to eat the ravens. (2) *Arabians*, interpreting it of travelling caravans from whom the prophet obtained what he needed to live on. But caravans keep as far away as they can from wild torrent-beds.

5. *he went and dwelt*] The first of these verbs, and, of course, the conjunction, is omitted by the LXX.

6. *And the ravens brought*, &c.] According to the LXX., the ravens brought him 'bread in the morning, and flesh in the evening.' Jerome in his life of Paul the hermit (§ 10) relates that a raven thus supplied the hermit's wants, "suspiciunt alitem corvum in ramo arboris consedisse, qui inde leniter subvolabat, et integrum panem ante ora mirantium deposuit.' Those who have watched the habits of large birds like the raven can bear witness to the large supply which they bring home under ordinary circumstances, and for Elijah's sustenance their natural energy was quickened.

7. *because there had been* [R.V. **was**] *no rain*] Not only had there been none, but the drought was continuing.

8, 9 And the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which *belongeth* to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to
10 sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman *was* there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel,
11 that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch *it*, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of
12 bread in thine hand. And she said, *As* the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and behold, I *am* gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son,

8—16. ELIJAH SENT TO ZAREPHATH AND SUSTAINED BY A WIDOW WOMAN. (Not in Chronicles.)

9. *get thee to Zarephath*] This was the city which was known in later times (Luke iv. 26) as *Sarepta*. Josephus says it lay between Sidon and Tyre. There the enemy of Baal-worship would hardly be expected to have sought refuge.

and dwell there] These words are omitted in the LXX.

I have commanded a widow woman] A source of sustenance hardly less precarious than the supply of the ravens. As in the former case, so here, the command implies that God has prompted her to fulfil His purpose. Elijah has been called, from this event, the first Apostle to the Gentiles.

10. *gathering of sticks*] R.V. modernizes the language by omitting the preposition. The abject poverty of the widow is seen from her coming forth to pick up any chance bits of wood which might have fallen from the trees outside the city walls.

11. *And as she was going to fetch* it] She is prepared to obey the request of the stranger. By her language in the next verse 'As the Lord thy God liveth' she accepts Elijah as a worshipper of Jehovah. The near neighbourhood of Phœnicia makes it easy to understand that the worship of Jehovah would be known to the inhabitants, and the woman would recognize an Israelite in Elijah both by speech and dress.

12. *meal in a* [R.V. the] *barrel ..oil in a* [R.V. the] *cruse*] The definite article is expressed in the original, and represented by the LXX. The barrel and the cruse were the special domestic articles in every house, and would be spoken of definitely.

two sticks] i.e. some small quantity. Thus we often say 'a couple' when we do not mean 'two' only.

my son] The LXX. renders by the plural 'sons,' perhaps because it is said, in verse 15, that 'she and he and *her house* did eat many days.' Josephus gives the singular 'my son' as the Hebrew.

that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, 13
Fear not; go *and* do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring *it* unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of 14
Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day *that* the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the 15
saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat *many* days. *And* the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did 16
the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah.

And it came to pass after these things, *that* the son of 17
the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick; and his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him.

eat it, and die] The drought had already brought so poor a person to the point of starvation.

13. *do as thou hast said*] i.e. Set about preparing bread from the meal which remains, but instead of taking first for yourselves, bring what is first ready to me.

and bring it [R.V. adds **forth**] *unto me*] It appears from what follows that Elijah dwelt afterwards in the house of the widow, but at first he waited outside till she made ready the food, which it must have needed much faith to give forth for the supply of the stranger. For 'after' R.V. reads 'after**ward**' to bring the language into accord with modern usage.

14. *God of Israel*] Omitted by the LXX., as are also, in the next verse, the words 'according to the saying of Elijah.'

15. *her house*] She had enough for all their own needs and something over, which she could give to poorer relations. The whole history of the woman shews that she knew much of the religion of the God of Israel, though we are not told how she had been brought to the knowledge.

many *days*] There is no word for 'many' as the italics shew. The Hebrews used 'days' for a long time. Thus the same word is rendered in Gen. xl. 4 'a season;' in Numb. ix. 22 'a year,' i.e. the complete round of days. The margin of A.V. has 'a full year' in the present verse.

17—24. DEATH AND RESTORATION OF THE WIDOW'S SON. (Not in Chronicles.)

17. *his sickness was so sore, that there was no breath left in him*] Josephus interprets this expression as if the youth were only seemingly dead; *τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφεῖναι καὶ δόξαι νεκρόν*. Yet both the mother and the prophet speak in the narrative of the 'slaying' of the son. The soul was departed, and it is the breathing into man of the breath of life,

18 And she said unto Elijah, What have I to do with thee, O
thou man of God? art thou come unto me to call my sin to
19 remembrance, and to slay my son? And he said unto her,
Give me thy son. And he took him out of her bosom, and
carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him
20 upon his own bed. And he cried unto the LORD, and said,
O LORD my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the
21 widow with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son? And he
stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto
the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this
22 child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the

which makes him 'a living soul.' All the language of Scripture speaks in the same tone. 'When the breath of man goeth forth, he shall turn again to his earth.'

18. *What have I to do with thee?*] Used by persons who wish him whom they address to depart from them. (Cf. 2 Sam. xvi. 10; Luke v. 8).

O thou man of God?] She recognizes the sacred character of Elijah, and feels that she is in presence of one who has closer communion with the Divine power than she. 'Man of God' becomes afterwards the distinguished appellation of Elijah and Elisha.

art thou come unto me to call [R.V. **bring**] *my sin to remembrance?*] The change of R.V. brings out a little more the woman's thought. The man of God has been sojourning with her, and hence God's attention, in her idea, has been more directed to her than it would otherwise have been. Her sin in this way has been brought to His remembrance, and so He has taken the life of her son as a punishment.

19. *And he took him out of her bosom*] Her arms were clasped about the dead boy. We need not understand the expression as of a child who was still young enough to be carried in the arms, though the prophet was able to carry him into his own chamber.

into a loft] R.V. **the chamber.** The word is so rendered in verse 23, and the two should be made to agree.

20. *O Lord my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow*] The LXX. omits 'my God.' In 'also' the prophet refers to the other evil which was brought on Israel and Phœnicia too by the drought. The widow had shewn such faith and obedience that we may regard the prophet's question as of the nature of a petition 'Let not this evil fall upon her.'

21. *And he stretched himself*] As though he would give of his own vitality to restore the life of the boy. The LXX. reads ἐνεφύσησε τῷ παιδαρίῳ = 'he breathed upon the child.' This is an exposition of the later words which speak of the child's soul returning to him.

22. *And the Lord heard* [R.V. **hearkened unto**] *the voice of Elijah*] This is the more usual rendering of the verb followed by a preposition as here. Instead of this verse the LXX. (*Vat.*) has 'and it was so, and the child cried out.' The following words also, in verse 23 'and Elijah took the child' are omitted in that version.

voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child, and 23
brought him down out of the chamber into the house, and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, See, thy son liveth. And the woman said to Elijah, Now *by* this I 24
know that thou *art* a man of God, and *that* the word of the LORD in thy mouth *is* truth.

And it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the 18
LORD came to Elijah in the third year, saying, Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth. And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And *there* 2
was a sore famine in Samaria. And Ahab called Obadiah, 3

24. *Now* by *this*] R.V. omits the last two words. The italics of A.V. shew that there is nothing in the Hebrew for 'by,' and the word rendered 'this' is only a particle to strengthen the adverb 'now.' The same two words are rendered in A.V. by 'now' simply in Ruth ii. 7 and should be so translated here. In 2 Kings v. 22 they are translated 'even now.'

I know that thou art *a man of God*] She had so addressed him above in verse 18, but what she desires now to express is her firm assurance. The mercy of her son's restoration spake more surely of God's messenger than did the stroke of his death. Jewish tradition represents this boy as the servant who afterwards accompanied Elijah, and finally became the prophet Jonah. (See Jerome, *Preface to Jonah.*)

the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth] This is more than to say that the word which the prophet speaks is truth; or than that the word of the Lord is in his mouth. It expresses a conviction that the Lord Jehovah in whose name Elijah speaks is the true God. Whatever stage her religious belief had before reached, she now advances beyond it, and acknowledges Jehovah as truth itself.

CHAP. XVIII. **1—6.** AHAB AND OBADIAH SEARCH THE LAND FOR GRASS. ELIJAH GOES TO MEET AHAB. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *in the third year*] According to the tradition preserved in the New Testament (Luke iv. 25; James v. 17) these three years cannot be reckoned from the beginning of the drought: for that is said to have lasted for three years and six months. The Jewish tradition reckons this third year to be the third year after the restoration of the widow's son.

shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain] Hence the LXX. on xvii. 1 explains that the rain would not come εἰ μὴ φανέντος αὐτοῦ. See note there.

2. *And* there was *a sore famine*] R.V. with more strict adherence to the original, **And the famine was sore.**

3. *Obadiah*] The Hebrew word *Obadjahu*, signifies 'servant of Jehovah,' and is a frequent name in the Old Testament, the most con-

which *was* the governor of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: for it was *so*, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them *by* fifty in a cave, and fed them *with* bread and water.) And Ahab said unto Obadiah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we leese not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

spicuous person so called being the prophet who was contemporary with Jeremiah. See *Obad.* i.

which was the governor of his house] R.V. more literally, **which was over the household**. See above xvi. 9.

4. *Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord*] Not content with having Baal-worship established and fostered by her husband, the queen determined to destroy all the worshippers of Jehovah, and probably she included in her extermination the priests who ministered at Dan and Bethel, for they did not disown Jehovah, though they brake His law by setting up an image to represent him. But no doubt the larger number whom Jezebel cut off were 'the sons of the prophets,' those who belonged to the schools of the prophets, which we learn from 2 Kings ii. were both numerous and largely frequented. It was a hundred of these men whom Obadiah saved in the time of persecution. The story of Jezebel's butchery is not given us, but it is alluded to here and in xix. 10. 14.

5. *Go into* [R.V. **through**] *the land*] The change gives a clearer idea of what is meant, and the preposition is the same which in verse 6 is rendered 'throughout.' In the next clause, as both nouns are definite in the original, the R.V. has '**the** fountains' and '**the** brooks.' In their neighbourhood grass would remain longest.

grass to save] R.V. 'grass **and** save,' which is literal and equally good English with A.V.

that we leese not all the beasts] They might have to kill some, but the discovery of grass might save a part. The LXX. gives *καὶ οὐκ ἐξολοθρευθήσονται ἀπὸ τῶν σκηνῶν*. 'Leese' is the old English form of 'lose.' Cf. Shakspeare, *Sonn.* v. 14, 'Flowers distilled *leese* but their show.'

6. *Ahab went one way by himself*] We can see the grievous necessity the land was in when the king himself goes forth on such a quest. No one save the two chief persons in the realm could be trusted to make this all-important search. The LXX. does not specify that Ahab went alone, but makes further mention of Obadiah's solitary journey, by saying 'And Obadiah was in the way alone, and Elijah by himself came to meet him.' There is a reason for Obadiah's being alone when such a meeting was to take place; why Ahab should go alone is not so clear.

And as Obadiah was in the way, behold Elijah met him: 7
and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art* thou
that my lord Elijah? And he answered him, I *am:* go, tell 8
thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here.* And he said, What have I 9
sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand
of Ahab, to slay me? *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is 10
no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to
seek thee: and when they said, *He is* not *there;* he took an
oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.
And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is* 11
here. And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from 12

7—16. MEETING OF OBADIAH AND ELIJAH. (Not in Chronicles.)

7. *and he knew him*] The prophet's garb would probably make him easy to be recognized, and he must have been seen more than once in Samaria, and by Ahab's household. The LXX. renders καὶ ἔσπευσε =and he hastened.

fell on his face] For to Obadiah Elijah would seem to be God's special representative, and the champion of the cause of the true religion. Josephus, wrongly, represents Elijah as bowing down to Obadiah. The expressions 'lord' and 'servant' or rather 'slave' used by Obadiah are indexes of his fear of Elijah.

Art *thou that my lord Elijah?*] R.V. better, 'Is it thou, my lord Elijah?' The word which A.V. translates is merely an addition to render the pronoun emphatic. See note on xvii. 27, where the emphatic particle is the same as in this verse.

8. *I* am] R.V. It is I. To correspond with the change in the preceding verse.

tell thy lord] It would be news of great interest to the king of Israel, as is clearly shewn by the efforts which he had already made to find Elijah.

9. *What* [R.V. wherein] *have I sinned*] Obadiah's fear is very natural. He is asked to carry a message to Ahab, which another disappearance of Elijah may make to seem untrue. He thinks in his alarm that the prophet does not know how great a friend he has been to the cause of Jehovah's servants, and so asks why his life should be put in jeopardy who had done so much to save the lives of the prophets.

10. *there is no nation or kingdom*] Of course Obadiah's words only apply to those countries immediately around Israel and into which Elijah could be supposed to have fled for refuge. But he employs the language of Oriental hyperbole, so frequently found in the Old Testament. Cf. Gen. vii. 19; Deut. ii. 25.

he took an oath] The search had been made after a very thorough and formal manner, and solemn attestation made of its fruitlessness. The LXX. says 'he burnt up that kingdom and the countries thereof because he did not find thee.'

12. *And it shall come to pass*] Clearly Obadiah regards Elijah's

thee, that the spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and *so* when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but *I* thy servant fear the
13 LORD from my youth. Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid an hundred men of the LORD's prophets by fifty in a cave, and
14 fed them *with* bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah *is here:* and he shall slay me.
15 And Elijah said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom
16 I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day. So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him: and Ahab went to meet Elijah.
17 And it came to pass, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab
18 said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy

concealment as only possible, amid such a thorough inquiry, by reason of divine aid. This may be exercised again, and he be taken away and concealed, before Ahab can be brought to him.

the spirit of the Lord shall carry thee] So Acts viii. 39, of the supernatural removal of Philip. Cf. likewise 2 Kings ii. 16.

fear the Lord from my youth] The true worshippers of Jehovah had not all perished out of Israel through Jeroboam's sin. Not only in special bodies, as the sons of the prophets, but also in positions of secular employment, we find some who still hold to the pure religion of Jehovah, and teach their children the same. The Hebrew, literally is 'but thy servant feareth the Lord from my youth,' which accounts for the italic '*I*' of A.V.

13. *Was it not told my lord*] Obadiah's thought seems to be that Elijah could believe nothing but evil of one who was in the household of Ahab. So by a question he tries to place himself in his true light, and to excuse himself at the same time, from being sent on so perilous an errand. The conduct of Obadiah in saving the prophets can hardly have been known to Ahab or his wife. But it would be likely to come to the knowledge of Elijah, as he would be a companion and friend of those who were rescued from Jezebel's fury.

15. *I will surely shew myself unto him to day*] With this assurance Obadiah is satisfied, and goes to find Ahab.

16. *And Ahab went*] The LXX. has 'And Ahab *ran forth* and went to meet Elijah.'

17—40. MEETING OF AHAB AND ELIJAH. BAAL PROVED TO BE NO GOD. SLAUGHTER OF BAAL'S PROPHETS. (Not in Chronicles.)

17. Art *thou he that troubleth Israel?*] R.V. **Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?** For Ahab would ascribe the drought and consequent famine directly to Elijah, after the language of xvii. 1.

father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now there- 19
fore send, *and* gather to me all Israel unto mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat *at* Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and 20
gathered the prophets together unto mount Carmel. And 21
Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye

18. *ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord*] This was done before the Baal-worship was introduced, by Jeroboam and by each king after him, and Omri, Ahab's father, was no better than the rest. The LXX. omits 'the commandments of.'

and thou hast followed Baalim] R.V. **the** Baalim. This was Ahab's additional sin; so that it is said of him (xxi. 25) 'There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness.' The plural *Baalim* is used because there were many forms or aspects of Baal, so that he was worshipped under several names, at different places, as Baal-berith, Baal-zebub, Baal-peor, &c. Ahab in compliance with the will of Jezebel had admitted them all into Israel.

19. *all Israel*] i.e. A representative body of the whole people.

unto mount Carmel] There seems to have been in Elisha's time a residence on Mt. Carmel, where he dwelt. For the Shunammite goes thither to find him. Perhaps Elijah chose the place because there was an altar there, which had been used for the worship of Jehovah, but was now thrown down. The mountain was also easy of access, and the sea, from whence the signs of the coming rain would be seen, was visible from it.

and the prophets of Baal] These, as the narrative shews, were the priests who presided over the Baal worship, and with their office was mixed up, as we see from chap. xxii., the profession of divination and soothsaying. Hence they are called prophets. The LXX. following the Jewish abhorrence for the name Baal, translate by *τῆς αἰσχύνης*, =*of the shame*, as if 'Bosheth' and not 'Baal' had been read by them.

the prophets of the groves] R.V. **of the Asherah.** See note on **xiv. 15.** Jezebel had introduced the female as well as the male divinity, so that nothing might be wanting to the complete observance of the worship to which she had been trained at home. The staff of priests, 850 for the two divinities, shews what an outlay was made for the perfection of the idolatrous rites.

which eat at Jezebel's table] That the queen should shew them special favour, and feed them at her own board, was one of the surest ways of making the Baal-priests and their service popular. She no doubt also supplied funds for the support of those priests who were not in the royal city.

21. *And Elijah came*] R.V. adds **near.** The word is the same which is twice so rendered in verse 30. It indicates an approach for the purpose of conference and support.

between two opinions? if the LORD *be* God, follow him: but
if Baal, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not
22 a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, *even* I only,
remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets *are* four
23 hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two
bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves,
and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire
under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on
24 wood, and put no fire *under:* and call ye on the name of

How long halt ye between two opinions] The verb is an expressive word, and is used below for the irregular, stumbling sort of dance about the altar of Baal (verse 26). It indicates a lame uncertain gait. Hence it suits very well the conduct of Israel, now drawn toward Jehovah, but not earnest there, and then attracted to Baal, but not altogether satisfied with that worship. The LXX. renders ἕως πότε ὑμεῖς χωλανεῖτε ἐπ' ἀμφοτέραις ταῖς ἰγνύαις; How long go ye lame on both knees? But there is no ground for the last word of that translation, and it loses the sense. It was a lame going, now in one direction, now in another, that Elijah was reproaching.

22. *I, even I only, remain*] R.V. am left. As in xix. 10 for the same word. Elijah means that he is the only one who now stands forward in Jehovah's name. No doubt there were others of those saved by Obadiah and in other ways, but in such dangerous days they kept out of sight. The scene on Carmel is full of sublimity. Elijah alone against the host of Baal-priests, and with the calm dignity befitting so solemn a time, in the midst of them all, proceeding to repair the broken altar of the Lord.

The LXX. adds at the close of this verse 'and the prophets of the grove four hundred.'

23. *Let them therefore give us*] i.e. Let there be given unto us. Let there be provided, for the trial which I am about to propose.

and let them choose one] Elijah yields place to them because of their greater number. So verse 25 'for ye are many.'

cut it in pieces] This was a part of the duty of the offerer of a burnt-offering. See Lev. i. 6; 'he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into his pieces.'

and I will dress the other bullock] The Hebrew uses for 'dress' the verb עָשָׂה = *to make*, which, in connexions like this, = 'to make ready' a victim for sacrifice. The same word is used Ps. lxvi. 15 'I will *offer* bullocks with goats,' also Exod. xxix. 36, 38, 39, 41. The LXX. translates by καὶ ἐγὼ ποιήσω τὸν βοῦν τὸν ἄλλον, a sentence from which we may see in what way ποιεῖν came to be used of sacrifice. But by itself ποιεῖν can no more mean 'to sacrifice' than could the English verb 'make.' The object, the victim, must always be expressed. The same word is employed again in verses 25, 26.

and lay it on wood] The LXX. omits these words.

no fire under] Deceit was largely practised in the heathen temples

your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And 25
Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they 26
dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that 27
Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god;

and sacrifices represented as miraculously consumed, for the accomplishment of which preparation was made in the ground beneath the altar.

24. *call ye on the name of your gods*] R.V. **god**. And so in verse 25, Baal was meant, and though the plural 'Elohim' came to be specially used of Jehovah, as embracing all that other nations conceived as attributes of all their gods, yet the plural is also applied to single heathen divinities. Thus 1 Sam. v. 7, 'Dagon our god'; 2 Kings i. 2, 'Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron.'

Elijah by saying 'call ye' identifies the people, to whom he is speaking, with the Baal-prophets to whom he uses the same words in the next verse.

on the name of the Lord] The LXX. adds 'my God.'

that answereth by fire] As Baal was specially the Sun-god, the trial by sending down fire was one to which the prophets of Baal could make no objection.

25. *the prophets of Baal*] Here, as above in verse 19, the LXX., instead of 'Baal' has *τῆς αἰσχύνης*. See note there. The pomp and splendour of the priests of Baal glittering no doubt with gorgeous vestments (cf. 2 Kings x. 22) would shew the more because of the rough shaggy garb of the Tishbite, whose congenial abode was the mountain tops or the fastnesses of Gilead.

26. *which was given them*] These words are omitted in the LXX., which represents 'hear us' in the latter part of the verse twice over.

and they leaped upon [R.V. **about**] *the altar*] One part of the heathen worship consisted in a dance around the altar, during which the devotees wrought themselves up to a pitch of frenzy, and then their action took the form of wild leaping. Such was probably the kind of worship of the *Salii* whom Numa instituted at Rome, and hence their name = *Jumpers*. The dances of the Aborigines of Australia were very much of this fashion.

27. *Elijah mocked them*] i.e. To make their folly more apparent to the people, he urged them on to greater exertions.

for he is *a god*] As you deem him. Elijah attributed no power to Baal. He merely addresses the priests from their own level, and to make the object of their worship more contemptible attributes to him

either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey,
28 *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked. And
they cried loud, and cut themselves after their manner with
knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.
29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they pro-
phesied until *the time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice,

certain acts and necessities which proclaim him no more powerful than his worshippers.

either he is talking] R.V. **musing.** The word and its cognates are more frequently used of meditation than of speech, and to picture Baal as so preoccupied by thought as not to hear the loud cries of these frantic prophets suits, better than the rendering of A.V., with the mockery which Elijah designed.

or he is pursuing] R.V. **gone aside.** The word appears to be used here to express the idea that Baal had withdrawn himself for rest or some other physical necessity. Gesenius renders 'recessit in conclavia interiora.'

28. *And they cried aloud*] Not recognizing the mockery of Elijah, but admitting that Baal might be overtaken by the necessities or occupations implied in the prophet's words.

after their manner] For devotees to wound and mutilate themselves in the worship of their divinities was common in other cults beside that of Baal and Ashêrah.

with knives and lancets] R.V. **lances.** The former of these nouns is commonly rendered 'sword,' though it is also used of other instruments for cutting, as of a razor (Ezek. v. 1), and an axe (Ezek. xxvi. 9). The second is constantly employed for 'spear' in connexion with 'shield' of a fully-armed soldier. The Baal-dance was most likely performed by the chief devotees with weapons in their hands, and with these it was that in their frenzy they wounded themselves.

29. *And it came to pass* [R.V. **it was so**], *when midday was past, and* [R.V. **that**] *they prophesied*] The word used for the wild raving of these heathen priests is the same which is employed for the most solemn utterances of the prophets of Jehovah (cf. Ezek. xxxvii. 10). The thought which connects the two uses seems to be of a person acting under some influence which he cannot control. In both cases the external manifestation was in a degree alike, for Jehovah's prophets were moved at times by great outward excitement. In these Baal-prophets it appears to have been of the nature of raving. On the bodily agitations of the prophets Maimonides (*de Fundam. Legis* VII. 3) writes 'The limbs of all the prophets, during the time of their prophetic inspiration, are agitated, their strength of body fails, their thoughts are snatched aside, and their intellect is left free to understand what is shewn to them.' Then he quotes the instances of Abraham (Gen. xv. 12) and of Daniel (Dan. x. 8).

the offering of the evening *sacrifice*] R.V. **oblation.** The Hebrew word מִנְחָה here used signifies that offering of fine flour mixed with oil, salt and frankincense, which was the accompaniment at times of sacri-

that *there was* neither voice, nor any that regarded. And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD that was broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: and *with* the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood

fices, but which at times was offered alone. It is generally rendered in A.V. 'meat offering,' and R.V. has changed this to 'meal offering' that the nature of the oblation might be more nearly described in the translation. 'Sacrifice' here is misleading, for the offering was without blood.

that [R.V. **but**] there was *neither voice.....regarded*] The change in R.V. follows on the alterations made in the first half of the verse. The sense then is given more clearly. What is meant to be expressed is, that though they went on the whole day through, yet there was no result of their cries and lacerations.

The LXX. omits this clause, and gives instead 'And Elijah the Tishbite spake to the prophets of the abominations, saying, Stand aside now, and I will offer my burnt offering. And they stood aside and went away.'

30. *And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down*] On the top of Carmel had been one of the high places where worship was paid to Jehovah, after the manner of the worship in the wilderness, till the place which God had chosen became known and the Temple built there. The custom of worship at such spots was continued for a long time after Solomon's date, and Elijah here treats the altar as a specially sacred erection, to be restored in Jehovah's honour.

The LXX. omits this clause here, but introduces one very similar in verse 32.

31. *Elijah took twelve stones*] On a similar preparation for an altar, compare the command of Joshua (Josh. iv. 5) where the stones are also taken 'according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel.' In this way the unity of worship of the same one God was signified. Elijah's prayer also recalls the still earlier memories of Abraham, Isaac and Israel.

of the sons of Jacob] The LXX. reads τοῦ Ἰσραήλ, thus making the expression more nearly to accord with the passage of Joshua just quoted. Also instead of 'he built *an altar*' the LXX. has 'he built *the stones*,' in the next verse.

32. *a trench*] The LXX. has θάλασσαν=*a sea*, which is interesting in connexion with the name given to the great cistern which Solomon caused to be made for the temple-services. Cf. vii. 23 above.

as great as would contain two measures of seed] The LXX. omits these words, which are not quite easy of explanation. The

in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels *with* water, and pour *it* on
34 the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.
35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the
36 trench also *with* water. And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known *this* day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things
37 at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast

measure mentioned is a *seah*, which is the third part of an ephah. But whether the dimension applies to each side of the altar, so that on each of the four sides there would be a ditch of this capacity, or whether this was the capacity of the whole surrounding trench is not evident. It was clearly intended to catch the water that was poured over the sacrifice.

33. *and laid* him [R.V. **it**] *on the wood, and* [R.V. **and he**] *said*] The former of these changes is in accordance with modern usage.

on the burnt sacrifice] R.V. **burnt-offering**. Which latter is the constant rendering of the Hebrew word. At the close of the verse the LXX. adds 'And they did so.'

35. *he filled the trench also*] The twelve barrels had not filled the trench, and so more water was added to make it quite full.

36. *And it came to pass*.....evening *sacrifice*] R.V. **oblation**. This change follows on what was done in verse 29. The LXX. omits this clause entirely. Elijah waited till the usual hour for the evening offering, that in this way his action might be in more accord with the order of worship which had been appointed in the Law, and so the people be put in mind of Jehovah's worship which they had cast aside.

Elijah the prophet came near] He was no priest, but at such time the protesting prophet assumed all the functions of the priestly office. And the people would be in no way surprised, for the patriarchal rule, which allowed others than the tribe of Levi to come near to the altar, had not become obsolete, as we can see from the action of Solomon. The LXX. gives, instead of these words, 'And Elijah cried unto heaven.'

Lord God of Abraham, Isaac [R.V. **of** Isaac], *and of Israel*] After these opening words of the invocation the LXX. adds 'Hear me, O Lord, hear me this day by fire,' and continues 'and let all this people know, &c.'

at thy word] The LXX. explains by διὰ σὲ='for thy sake.'

37. *that thou* art *the Lord God*] R.V. **that thou Lord art God.** This is what Elijah desired, that it should be shewn that to apply the

turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD 38
fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and
the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in
the trench. And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on 39
their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the
LORD, he *is* the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the 40
prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they
took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook
Kishon, and slew them there.

And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; 41

name 'Elohim' to Baal, and idols like him, was a folly and a delusion. The heathen, and those who went after them, used this name for the objects of their worship, and Elijah in his mockery had employed their phrase (verse 27) and said of Baal 'He is Elohim.' In the present verse, as in verse 39 below, the noun has the article before it, which is shewn by the rendering of the A.V. in verse 39 'he is *the* God.' But such an insertion is needless. If we assert that Jehovah is God, it is implied that there is none else. The R.V. therefore omits the article twice over in verse 39, reading **he is God**.

38. *Then the fire of the Lord fell*] In the LXX. we have 'and there fell fire from the Lord out of heaven.'

burnt sacrifice] R.V. **burnt-offering** as in verse 33. To mark the might of Him who sent the fire, it not only consumes the victims and licks up the water, but devoured wood, stones and dust alike.

39. *And when all the people saw* it, *they fell*] The LXX. simply says 'And all the people fell.' Josephus describes the reaction thus, 'They fell upon the ground and worshipped the one God, calling Him most mighty and true, while the others were but names devised by wrong and senseless opinion.'

40. *Take the prophets of Baal*] Elijah avails himself of the newly-kindled enthusiasm to put an end, as far as he may, to the false worship. Josephus explains 'they seized and slew the prophets, Elijah exhorting them so to do.' Although the text may be taken to signify that Elijah put the priests to death with his own hand, we can hardly suppose this to have been so. He is only said to do himself what he caused others to do.

the brook Kishon] This is at the foot of Mount Carmel on the side towards the sea. It was the spot where Sisera was overthrown by Barak (Judges iv. 7) and the stream then was pictured as sweeping away the dead bodies of those who had been slain by the Israelite forces (Judges v. 21).

41—46. THE PROPHECY OF RAIN. ELIJAH AWAITS ITS APPROACH ON MOUNT CARMEL AND THEN GOES TO JEZREEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

41. *Elijah said unto Ahab*] The king had been present through all the events of the day, but had been powerless to stay the slaughter

42 for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went
up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of
Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put
43 his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up
now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked,
and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven
44 times. And it came to pass at the seventh *time*, that he
said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like

of the false prophets. Ahab was overpowered by what he had seen, and Jezebel was not at hand to prompt him to oppose either the prophet or the people.

Get thee up, eat and drink] There was probably preparation made for the king's refreshment on the top of Carmel, where the offerings had been made, and the words of the prophet apply to Ahab's return from the Kishon, which was at a lower level. The expression 'eat and drink' has been taken by some to be spoken in mockery or uttered as if to one who was callous even after such a scene of butchery. It would rather seem as if Elijah had not yet despaired of Ahab, and was giving the king, who must have been paralysed by the scene, the best advice for his present need, after the long and tragic day. The words may also imply that now there was no longer any fear of want, for the rain was coming at once. Thus they would form a fit introduction for the announcement which follows.

for there is *a* [R.V. **the**] *sound of abundance of rain*] The expression is definite in the original. The LXX. has a very poetical paraphrase ὅτι φωνὴ τῶν ποδῶν τοῦ ὑετοῦ, 'for there is the sound of the feet of the rain.'

42. *Elijah went up to the top of Carmel*] To a different point from that to which Ahab had gone. This is clear from verse 44, where the prophet despatches his servant with a message to the king.

and he cast [R.V. **bowed**] *himself*] The prophet's attitude was that of prayer. Cf. Jas. v. 18. The humble position is further indicated by the clause which follows, 'he put his face between his knees.'

43. *look toward the sea*] Because from that quarter would come the indication of the approaching storm. The LXX. omits 'he went up' in the next clause, and adds at the close of the verse 'and the servant went again seven times.'

seven times] Meaning an indefinite number. 'Seven' is thus used Ps. xii. 6, cxix. 164; Prov. xxiv. 16.

44. *there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand*] R.V. **a cloud out of the sea as small as a man's hand.** This is more in accordance with the Hebrew construction. The statement was not meant to describe the shape of the cloud, but the size of it. The servant returns as soon as there appears the smallest token of a rain-cloud. The Hebrew word here employed, כַּף, is sometimes used for the 'sole of the foot' (see Josh. i. 3). Josephus therefore gives here οὐ πλέον ἴχνους ἀνθρωπίνου 'not bigger than the sole of a man's foot.'

a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the 45
heaven was black *with* clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the 46
hand of the LORD was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and 19
withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword. Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah, saying, So let 2

Prepare [R.V. **make ready** thy chariot] The change is introduced from 2 Kings ix. 21, where the word for 'chariot,' which is here understood, stands in the text.

45. *in the mean while*] [R.V. **in a little while**] The literal sense is 'until so and until so.' The expression is probably borrowed from a waving of the hand backward and forward, and means 'before you could do that.' Hence 'in a little while' seems to be the better rendering.

And Ahab rode] The LXX. says 'Ahab wept.' Ahab made his way to his palace (see xxi. 2) at Jezreel, that he might report to Jezebel what had happened. Jezreel stood in the plain of Jezreel, in the tribe of Issachar, and became one of the most famous of the royal residences of the kings of Israel.

46. *the hand of the Lord was on Elijah*] A divine impulse which directed and supported him in what he was to do. If there was still hope of a change in Ahab, neither God nor His prophet would be wanting to help him in the struggle after better courses. The running was a sign of Bedouin endurance, the halting outside the city, at the entrance of Jezreel, was a piece of Bedouin wariness.

CHAP. XIX. 1—8. ELIJAH'S FLIGHT TO HOREB. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *And Ahab told Jezebel*] The LXX. adds 'his wife.'

and withal how] The construction in the original is here irregular. The words rendered 'withal' are omitted in nearly all the Versions. The expression translated 'withal how' is exactly the same as that which is rendered 'all that' in the previous clause, and does not suit the verb which follows. But it is not easy to explain the repetition with two different verbs, and no doubt the English translation gives the sense which was intended. He told his wife in general 'all that' Elijah had done and specially 'all, how' he had slain, &c.

2. *Jezebel sent a messenger*] The queen could not restrain herself in her rage. She cannot make arrangements for seizing Elijah at once, but lets him know that she is resolved to do so. The LXX. has no word for 'a messenger,' but enlarges the sentence by the words 'If thou art Elijah, and I Jezebel, so let God &c.' The message intimates that if he can be found he will be put to death on the morrow.

the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as
3 the life of one of them *by* to morrow about *this* time. And
when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came
to Beer-sheba, which *belongeth* to Judah, and left his servant
4 there. But he himself went a day's journey into the wilder-
ness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he
requested for himself that he might die; and said, *It is*

3. *And when he saw* that] The LXX. reading וַיִּרָא instead of the text וַיַּרְא renders by *καὶ ἐφοβήθη*, 'and he was afraid.' And this makes a good sense. But it is not necessary. Elijah saw (mentally) from the message which came to him, that he must be gone, if he would save his life. Moreover after the verb 'to fear' there usually follows a mention of the person who is feared.

and went for his life] i.e. To make sure of saving his life. It was no part of his duty to expose himself to unnecessary peril. The same phrase is found in 2 Kings vii. 7 and nearly the same in Gen. xix. 17. The Vulgate rendering 'quocunque eum ferebat voluntas' 'wherever he felt inclined' is certainly not what is meant.

and came to *Beer-sheba, which* belongeth *to Judah*] Beer-sheba was in the tribe of Simeon (see Josh. xix. 2), though in Josh. xv. 28 it is included among the uttermost cities of Judah. Here 'which belongeth to Judah' signifies 'which is part of the kingdom of Judah.' Elijah had thus escaped from Ahab's dominions. The use of such a phrase shews that the writer of this narrative was an Israelite.

and left his servant there] The servant (according to Jewish tradition, the son of the widow of Zarephath) must have attended on him from Carmel to Jezreel, and from thence to the south of Judah. The prophet now desires solitude, and so dismisses him. In the need of spiritual communion with God no companion is desired. Even Jesus himself said to His disciples 'Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder' (Matt. xxvi. 36).

4. *a day's journey into the wilderness*] The wilderness here spoken of is the desert of Paran, through which the Israelites had of old wandered from Egypt toward the promised land.

under a juniper tree] The LXX. merely represents the Hebrew name רֹתֶם by a transliteration *ὑποκάτω Ραθμέν*. The plant is one of the broom kind. It was stout enough to be used for fuel (Ps. cxx. 4), and in time of famine its roots could be eaten (Job xxx. 3, 4). The last quoted passage marks it as a tree growing in the wilderness. The Hebrew says literally '*one* juniper tree,' and thus depicts for us the desolate country just on the borders of the wilderness.

that he might die] The prophet had probably had some hope that Ahab would disown the idolatrous worship after the scene on Carmel and the destruction of the priests. Now he sees that the influence of Jezebel is as strong as ever, and the result is deep despondency and a longing to be removed from the struggle.

enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers. And as he lay and slept under a 5
juniper tree, behold then, an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat. And he looked, and behold, *there* 6
was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water *at* his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.
And the angel of the LORD came again the second time, 7
and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey *is* too great for thee. And he arose, and did eat 8
and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

I am *not better than my fathers*] Elijah had probably reached a ripe age, and thinking his labours all fruitless, prays for removal. While there was work to be done, and as he thought, hope of success, he was a willing servant. It is only in the dark moment of seeming failure that his natural feeling of having wrought no reform, such as he longed for, wrings from him the cry in the text. We must not deem Elijah to blame for this feeling. The way in which God sent him comfort and sustenance shews us that the prophet's conduct was not such as to merit rebuke. See a noble sermon on 'Elijah' by the late F. W. Robertson. *Sermon VI. Second Series.*

5. *And as he lay and slept*] Better, with R.V., 'And he **lay down** and slept.' The verb is the same as that which is so rendered at the close of the next verse. The description is of what Elijah did, not only of something which happened 'as he lay.'

behold then] R.V. **and behold.** A change made necessary by the previous alteration.

an angel touched him] The LXX. omits 'an angel,' and so does the narrative of Josephus, which merely has διεγειράντος δ' αὐτόν τινος.

6. *and behold*, there was] The R.V., following the Hebrew order, puts 'at his head' immediately after these words.

7. *because the journey* is *too great for thee*] No mention has yet been made of the distance or place to which Elijah meant to go. It seems therefore more natural to conclude that the flight into the wilderness had been undertaken by the prophet merely because he thought that he would there be less likely to be found. And he appears to have made no preparation for a journey, but to have started without any store of food. In consequence of direction or prompting given during his rest he went forward to Horeb. No place was so suitable for a divine communication as that which was hallowed by God's appearance unto Moses. The Vulgate rendering seems to imply what has been here said, that the direction for the future journey was a divine communication 'grandis enim tibi restat via.'

8. *in the strength of that meat*] As Moses had been forty days on Sinai and had taken no food with him, so now Elijah, who was to be in many ways a counterpart of Moses, is divinely sustained by the food which had been supplied to him while he rested. The fasting of Jesus

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and
behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto
10 him, What doest thou here, Elijah? And he said, I have
been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the
children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown

at the time of His temptation lights up these Old Testament histories, which were meant to preach to former ages the lesson which the Lord emphasises, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'

forty days and forty nights] A great deal has been written to shew that the journey from the edge of the wilderness of Paran to Mount Horeb could not have occupied forty days, even of very slow walking. But there is nothing in the verse to make it necessary to suppose that the writer intended such a sense. Elijah was wandering in despondency and seeking to hide himself. The time spent was not what was required for the journey only, but far more in meditation and prayer, and seeking from God a reason why all the toiling and testimony, which the prophet had bestowed, had proved so unproductive. The spiritual conflict of Elijah prefigures the spiritual conflict of Jesus.

unto Horeb the mount of God] So called because, above all other places, it was distinguished through God's manifestations of His power and glory. The LXX. (*Vat.*) does not represent 'of God.'

9—18. GOD'S REVELATION AND DIRECTION TO ELIJAH. (Not in Chronicles.)

9. *unto a cave*] The Hebrew has the article, and this is represented in the LXX. by τὸ σπήλαιον 'the cave.' It is very likely that by Elijah's time tradition had fixed on a definite place as that 'cleft of the rock' in which Moses stood (Exod. xxxiii. 22) when Jehovah passed by. If this were so the place would be deemed very sacred, and would be most appropriate to that divine explanation now to be given to Elijah. For to him was to be presented another Theophany. Some have suggested, as an explanation of the definite description, that the cave had already become a resort of pilgrims to Horeb, but for this there appears no evidence.

What doest thou here?] An opportunity is given to Elijah to open his whole heart. The question here must have a different force from that which it bears after the manifestation of God's presence in verse 13. Here it must signify 'Why art thou thus cast down?' 'Has thy knowledge of Jehovah gone no farther than to see Him only in works of vengeance?'

10. *I have been very jealous*] There is no boastfulness in these words. Elijah only opens his grief, and sets forth that he has done his utmost, but that, in spite of all, both king and people are still unrepentant.

have forsaken thy covenant] For 'thy covenant' the LXX. reads, in this verse but not in 14, 'Thee.' The portion of the covenant here referred to is Exod. xx. 3, 'Thou shalt have none other gods but Me.' So forsaking the covenant is the same as forsaking God.

down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away. And he said, Go forth, and stand 11
upon the mount before the LORD. And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake: and after 12
the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and

thrown down thine altars] Elijah's language here implies that acceptable sacrifices had been offered to God in more places than one. In xviii. 30 the altar of Carmel is called 'the altar of the Lord that was broken down.' And there were probably many similar ones.

slain thy prophets] The people appear to have assented to such acts of Jezebel and her agents as are mentioned in xviii. 4. Elijah also immediately includes them with Jezebel as seeking his life to take it away.

I only, am left] Elijah speaks according to his own knowledge. No one had stood with him on Carmel. His words on that occasion (xviii. 22) are the same as here.

Elijah's reply seems to indicate that he saw nothing more which could be done, and for this reason had sought solitude and refuge in flight.

11. *Go forth*] The LXX. here adds *αὔριον, to-morrow*, and the narrative in Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 13. 7) represents the prophet's going forth as taking place on the day following the divine questioning. But these variations from the text may be, and probably are, due to a desire to assimilate the narrative to Exod. xxxiv. 2, where Moses is told to 'be ready in the morning.'

stand upon the mount before the Lord] Elijah does not go forth (see verse 13) until he recognises the presence of the Lord in the still small voice. The violence of the wind and the earthquake and the devouring rage of the fire, he was made to feel, were not the proper manifestations of Jehovah, were not those tokens by which He would be known to His people, and consequently he abode still in the cave while they were raging. The Lord had not yet appeared.

And behold, the Lord passed by] The participial form of the verb עָבַר (literally *is passing by*) seems to require a modification of the translation. What appears to be meant is 'the Lord is about to pass by and you shall be able at that time to recognise something of His true character, and to gain the instruction which you need from this revelation.' The LXX. gives this sense, *ἰδοὺ παρελεύσεται κύριος*, 'Behold the Lord will pass by.' In that case these words belong to the preceding clause, and must be connected with the command to go forth, which the prophet obeyed when he found in which manifestation it pleased the Lord to be present. Thus the narrative of what occurred will commence at 'And a great and strong wind, &c.'

13 after the fire a still small voice. And it was *so*, when Elijah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood *in* the entering in of the cave. And behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou
14 here, Elijah? And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only,
15 am left; and they seek my life to take it away. And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint

12. *a still small voice*] Literally, as in the margin of R. V. 'a sound of gentle stillness.' There is nothing to indicate to us whether the sound was articulate or not, nor is it said that the Lord was now present, but the action of the prophet shews that he knew the time was come for him to present himself before Jehovah. The *Alex.* LXX. adds 'and the Lord was there,' but the narrative is much more impressive without those words.' For a similar recognition of God's presence cf. Job iv. 16 'there was silence and I heard a voice.'

13. *wrapped his face in his mantle*] The revelation was not one for the eye, but for the spirit, of the prophet. Like Moses 'he was afraid to look upon God' (Exod. iii. 6).

in *the entering in of the cave*] The command given before had been 'Go forth and stand upon the mount,' but this only applies to such an advance as would bring him out of the cave and into the open air, not to any climbing to the mountain top.

What doest thou here?] This repeated question seeks to know whether the prophet has understood the manifestations that have been made to him, and whether he is able to apply them to his own circumstances. The answer coming in the same words as before seems to declare that Elijah is still ignorant of what is meant. God therefore gives him direct charges which shall make it clear that, though his own success has not been such as he expected, yet God's work is still going forward and that new agents are already prepared, in Jehovah's design, for advancing it as He sees best.

15. *Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus*] It seems from what follows that the margin of the R. V. gives the truer sense, viz. 'by the wilderness to Damascus.' Elijah was to go back through the wilderness, the way by which he had come to Horeb, and we see that he came first to Abel-meholah, which was on the west of the Jordan, not far from Bethshean (see note above on iv. 12). Thus he was sent by God's encouragement, and with His protection, through the land of Israel from which he had fled.

anoint Hazael to be king over Syria] So far as the Scripture record goes we have no notice that Elijah performed this command in its literal sense, Hazael being subsequently informed by Elisha (2 Kings viii. 13)

Hazael to be king over Syria: and Jehu the son of Nimshi 16
shalt thou anoint to be king over Israel: and Elisha the son

that the Lord had made known that he should become king over Israel, though even then he was not anointed. We must interpret the meaning of the command in accordance with the prophet's action, judging that he understood what was intended by the words. The word 'anoint' is used concerning Jehu and Elisha as well as Hazael; and we know that Elijah did not anoint Elisha, though he could easily have done so, but only made known, by the act of casting his prophetic mantle upon him, that he was called to that office. In the same way then we may understand the rest of the divine order. Elijah was to receive assurance for himself, and to make known that assurance to others, as he found occasion, that God was still ruling Israel both from without and from within, and would call to the throne of Syria one who should execute His judgements upon His rebellious people, and to the throne of Israel one who should destroy Baal and his worship out of the land. We shall not err, it seems, if we suppose that the knowledge, which Elisha had (2 Kings viii. 13) when he says 'The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria,' was derived from Elijah's communication, as also the instruction which led him, at a future day (2 Kings ix. 1, 2), to send one of the sons of the prophets to Ramoth-Gilead to anoint Jehu. Hence 'anoint' in the text becomes equivalent to 'point them out as the anointed ones.'

On Hazael's wars at a subsequent time with Israel and Judah, see 2 Kings viii. 28, 29. He subsequently invaded the territory of Israel and especially overran the district East of Jordan (2 Kings x. 32, 33), and held Israel in subjection 'all the days of Jehoahaz' (2 Kings xiii. 3, 22). Through him, we are told, 'the Lord began to cut Israel short' (2 Kings x. 32), and there are many indications that this king was for Israel, the rod of God's anger, a divinely appointed minister of His judgements.

For 'anoint' the R. V. reads **thou shalt anoint**, a change required by the Hebrew which is not an imperative.

16. *And Jehu the son of Nimshi*] We learn from the account of Jehu's anointing (2 Kings ix. 2) that Nimshi was Jehu's grandfather. He was 'Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi.' He was one of Ahab's captains, and heard the sentence which Elijah pronounced against Ahab for the murder of Naboth (2 Kings ix. 25, 26). When Jehoram had succeeded Ahab, Jehu was anointed and conspired against him, and slew not only Jehoram but also caused to be slain seventy sons of Ahab, and the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and all the worshippers of Baal. For the history of these doings see 2 Kings x. It is clear that Jehu looked upon himself as God's ordained instrument, and considered his actions as 'zeal for the Lord.' We may therefore conclude that there had been made known to him something of the message which the Lord here gives to Elijah, and that inspired by it, he rose against the house of Ahab. For details of Jehu's history, see notes on 2 Kings ix, x.

of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint to be prophet
17 in thy room. And it shall come to pass, *that* him that
escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay: and him that
18 escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay. Yet I
have left *me* seven thousand in Israel, all the knees

of Abel-meholah] See above on iv. 12. These words are omitted by the LXX. For the history of Elisha see 2 Kings chapp. ii—xiii. At the time of his call Elisha was probably a young man. His father and mother were still alive, and he was living with them.

prophet in thy room] These words would teach Elijah that he was not to expect the accomplishment of all God's purpose during his own lifetime, but only to prepare a representative to be ready when it was God's will to call him away. Till Elijah is about to be taken up into heaven (2 Kings ii.) we read no more of Elisha than is told us in this chapter. He ministered unto Elijah and was ready to attend him on his last journey, and in those days of his ministration he doubtless received all the teaching which God had given to his master, and was made to see how the hand of God was ever working amidst His people.

17. *shall Elisha slay*] Here we come upon evidence that the language of these verses (15—18) is not to be pressed into a literal interpretation. In the second book of Kings the compiler gives us all that he thought needful of the life of Elisha, and there is nothing in it which accords with a literal acceptance of this verse. We read of none that were slain by the hand of Elijah's successor. But his voice and his labours for the overthrow of false worship, and for making known, both to Israel and to the nations round about, that there was 'no God in all the earth but in Israel' (2 Kings vi. 15) were constant, and by this 'sword of his mouth' he overthrew the foes of Jehovah. In this sense he fulfilled the declaration in the text, his work coming in and being effectual in places and ways where Hazael and Jehu wrought no deliverance.

18. *Yet I have left* me] R. V. (and margin of A. V.) **Yet will I leave me.** And this is not only required by the Hebrew words, but for a true conception of the sense of the passage. Elijah had been witness of God's might and power to execute judgement, in the wind, the earthquake, and the fire, and subsequently of the true presence of God in the still small voice which spake of mercy. He is now sent to make known who the ordained ministers of vengeance shall be, Hazael and Jehu being the embodiment of what was portrayed in the elemental fury which had passed before him. But after all came the voice which bare witness of Jehovah's presence, and this Elijah is now told shall be made known hereafter in the multitude of those who, after all trials, shall still remain faithful. The LXX. renders 'and thou shalt leave in Israel, &c.'

seven thousand in Israel] Used for an indefinite number. On this use of 'seven' cf. above xviii. 43. Also Prov. xxiv. 16; Matth. xviii. 21, 22. The total was small compared with the whole people of Israel, but they were God's 'holy remnant,' the seed of a purified congregation of the future.

which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

19 So he departed thence, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he with the twelfth: and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him. 20 And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow thee. And he said unto him, Go back again: for what have I done to thee?

hath not kissed him] That such was the nature of some part of the worship offered to false gods we can see from Hos. xiii. 2, 'Let the men that sacrifice *kiss* the calves.' Probably the Latin *adoro* is etymologically connected with this. For kissing as an act of religious homage, see also Ps. ii. 12.

19—21. THE CALL OF ELISHA. (Not in Chronicles.)

19. *So he departed thence*] Josephus says, what the visit to Abelmeholah shews, that Elijah returned into the land of the Hebrews. He was instructed, comforted, and assured of safety. God, who had assigned him work to do, and given him hope therein, would not allow him to fall into the hands of his enemies.

plowing with *twelve yoke* of oxen *before him*] He had servants with him to manage all the yokes but one, and to these people it was that he afterwards made a farewell feast. It is clear from the description that Elisha was the son of a wealthy father, and that the leaving all to follow Elijah was a trial to test the character of the future prophet.

Elijah passed by him] The Hebrew requires the rendering of the R.V. **passed over unto him**. Elijah left the road and crossed into the field where Elisha and his companions were plowing.

and cast his mantle upon him] The prophetic mantle was probably of a special character. In Zech. xiii. 4 we are told that the prophets 'shall not wear a rough garment (R.V. *a hairy mantle*) to deceive,' and the whole description of Elijah (2 Kings i. 8) and the New Testament explanation thereof in the description of John the Baptist, bears out the idea that he wore such a mantle. It was this mantle which Elisha took up after the departure of Elijah into heaven, and the possession thereof, and the employment of it to divide the waters of the Jordan, caused the sons of the prophets to exclaim 'The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha' (2 Kings ii. 15). To cast such a robe upon the shoulders of Elisha was to claim him, by a symbolical act, as one of the members of the prophetic band. This Elisha felt and acted on.

20. *kiss my father and my mother*] He was sensible that the separation was to be permanent, and that a higher call than that of earthly parentage was laid upon him. This is the ground for his petition. Thus will he make known to his parents the reason of his departure.

Go back again: for what have I done to thee?] Elijah grants his

21 And he returned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen, and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen, and gave unto the people, and they did eat. Then he arose, and went after Elijah, and ministered unto him.

request, but accompanies the permission with words which must remind Elisha that he cannot now stay amid his home duties, 'Go back again,' he says, 'but let it be only for the filial leave-taking, for what have I done to thee? Have I not chosen thee to be my companion and helper? Is not God's voice calling thee, through me, to do Him service?'

21. *And he returned back from* [R.V. **from following**] *him*] Elisha clearly understood the permission which was given to him. He is allowed a short space for leave-taking, but the call is imperative, and he is to follow with all speed. Elijah goes his way, but leaves Elisha in no doubt whither he is going, and where he may be found.

and took a [R.V. **the**] *yoke of oxen*] The language in the original is definite, and no doubt refers to the particular pair of oxen which Elisha had himself been using.

and boiled their flesh] Thus he made a farewell feast to those with whom he had been working. Having a true conception of the great duty to which he was called, he would have them rejoice, and not sorrow, at his departure.

and gave unto the people] i.e. The plowmen, and other helpers in the work which they had been doing. There is nothing to guide us in deciding whether the feast was made at the place where the call was received, or whether it was a meal given in the home to which Elisha went to bid adieu to his parents. It seems however more natural to understand it of the latter. At such a parting meal the parents of him who was going away were hardly likely to be absent.

Because the word rendered 'slew' in this verse, is very frequently translated 'sacrificed' some have thought that the ceremony here described was a religious one. But there is no mention of an altar, which would have been necessary, nor of the devotion of any part of the slain beasts as an offering. The guests were invited to a family feast, after the patriarchal fashion, and joined in the festivities attendant on such an occasion. The parents of Elisha were perhaps likeminded with himself and felt the grandeur of the office to which he was called. In that case the feeling of joyous thankfulness would be the most prevalent.

went after Elijah, and ministered unto him] Josephus adds to the narrative, that 'Elisha immediately began to prophesy.' In the Scripture story he is not mentioned again till the departure of Elijah into heaven is close at hand (2 Kings ii. 1). But we cannot doubt that he was the companion of Elijah from that day forward, and we are shewn something of the nature of the attendance and ministration here alluded to in 2 Kings iii. 11, where we read of Elisha as he 'which poured water on the hands of Elijah.' The members of the prophetic school

And Ben-hadad the king of Syria gathered all his host 20
together: and *there were* thirty and two kings with him, and
horses, and chariots: and he went up and besieged Samaria,
and warred against it. And he sent messengers to Ahab 2
king of Israel into the city, and said unto him, Thus saith
Ben-hadad, Thy silver and thy gold *is* mine; thy wives also 3
and thy children, *even* the goodliest, *are* mine. And the 4

seem to have lived after the fashion of 'Brethren of the common life,' and the less prominent members did service of every kind for those who were at the head.

CH. XX. 1—12. BEN-HADAD KING OF SYRIA BESIEGES SAMARIA. HIS MESSAGES TO AHAB. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. In the LXX. Chapters xx. and xxi. are transposed, apparently with a view of bringing the history in which Elijah plays a part into closer connexion. Josephus also adopts the same order of events in his history. See *Ant.* VIII. 13. 8 and VIII. 14. 1.

Ben-hadad the king of Syria] See above on xv. 18. The LXX. always translates the first syllable of this name, writing *υἱὸς Ἀδερ.* There is nothing to help us to conclude with certainty whether the Ben-hadad of this verse was the same who made a treaty with Asa king of Judah against Baasha king of Israel. Between the death of Baasha and the beginning of Ahab's reign was only about 14 years, so that it is not impossible that he may be the same Ben-hadad mentioned before, but perhaps the probability is in favour of his being a son or grandson with the same name.

gathered all his host together] The LXX. adds here 'and went up and besieged Samaria,' and repeats nearly the same words in the next verse.

thirty and two kings with him] These would be princes from the different provinces of Aram (Syria) over whom Ben-hadad at Damascus would be lord superior. They would probably include princes from among the Hittites and Hamathites, who dwelt near at hand and who would be in alliance or perhaps tributaries.

and horses] The LXX. gives *πᾶς ἵππος* 'all his cavalry.'

besieged Samaria] Josephus says that Ahab did not feel equal to meeting his powerful adversary in the field and so shut up himself, and all that he could collect, in the strongest fortresses in the land, himself continuing in Samaria as the best defended.

and warred (R. V. **fought**) *against it*] The change of rendering is made because the verb is nearly always translated 'fight' elsewhere. It is so rendered in verses 23 and 25 of this chapter.

2. *he sent messengers*] Sending first, no doubt, as Josephus explains, a herald to ask that his ambassadors might be received to explain his demands.

3. even *the goodliest*] These words are omitted in the LXX. The claim laid to the wives and children would in Oriental eyes amount to a deposition of the monarch, or a deprivation of his royal power. It was

king of Israel answered and said, My lord, O king, according
5 ing to thy saying, I *am* thine, and all that I have. And the messengers came again, and said, Thus speaketh Ben-hadad, saying, Although I have sent unto thee, saying, Thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy
6 children; yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about *this* time, and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants; and it shall be, *that* whatsoever *is* pleasant in thine eyes, they shall put *it* in their hand, and
7 take *it* away. Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, Mark, I pray you, and see how this *man* seeketh mischief: for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold;

one of the first acts of a conqueror to seize the wives of the vanquished opponent. Ahab's fear of going forth would encourage Ben-hadad to treat him thus, just as his submissive answer at first only led to larger demands on the part of the besieger.

4. *according to thy saying*] The R. V. inserts **It is** before these words and thus brings out the division of the verse as marked in the Hebrew. The order of words in the original is 'It is according to thy saying, my lord, O king.'

5. *Although I have sent unto thee*] The R. V. translates **I sent indeed** *unto thee*, and begins the 6th verse with **But** instead of *yet*. This brings out the arrogancy of Ben-hadad more fully. It is as though he said 'You submitted to my first demand, but in spite of that I am not satisfied.' Now not only Ahab's houses and treasures are threatened but those of all his subjects. Hence the summoning of a council to discuss the position.

6. *to-morrow about this time*] The imperious victor (as he thought himself) would suffer no delay. His orders were to be carried out at once.

7. *called all the elders of the land*] It was more than a gathering of the chief men of the city. Probably at such a crisis many of the principal persons who dwelt at other times away from the fortified cities would have gathered in Samaria for safety. It was with all these that Ahab conferred. Josephus represents the king as gathering τὸ πλῆθος, 'the bulk of the people.' This can hardly have been thought necessary, nor is it at all after the manner of Eastern monarchs. The treasures which were now threatened would be the possessions of the principal men, and to them the king would appeal for advice. It is however mentioned in verse 8 that all the people agreed to the decision that Ben-hadad's demand should be rejected. Ahab's sentence is left unconcluded, but the conclusion suggests itself without being spoken. It would have run somewhat thus, "But now he threatens to seize your treasures as well as mine, tell me what answer I shall send to him."

and I denied him not. And all the elders and all the 8
people said unto him, Hearken not *unto him*, nor consent.
Wherefore he said unto the messengers of Ben-hadad, Tell 9
my lord the king, All that thou didst send for to thy servant
at the first I will do: but this thing I may not do. And the
messengers departed, and brought him word again. And 10
Ben-hadad sent unto him, and said, The gods do so unto
me, and more also, if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for
handfuls for all the people that follow me. And the king 11
of Israel answered and said, Tell *him*, Let not him that
girdeth on *his harness* boast himself as he that putteth *it*
off. And it came to pass, when *Ben-hadad* heard this 12
message, as he *was* drinking, he and the kings in the pavi-

8. *Hearken not* unto him, *nor consent*] The R. V. omits the needless italics and reads **neither** instead of *nor*. The shorter the form of such a decision the better and more natural.

9. *Tell my lord the king*] The LXX. says 'your lord'. The Hebrew accords better with the generally submissive conduct of Ahab throughout the whole narrative. The picture of the power of the Israelitish king is not very magnificent. Even in this final answer he speaks of himself as Ben-hadad's 'servant'.

10. *if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me*] i.e. I will bring such a host that if each man were but to take with him a handful of earth, Samaria would be all carried away. The boastful tone is quite of a piece with all Ben-hadad's previous conduct.

The LXX. has read שְׁעָלִים instead of שְׁעָלִים and so instead of 'handfuls' it gives ταῖς ἀλώπεξι = 'for the foxes (or jackals).' Josephus explains Ben-hadad's threat to have meant, that the Syrian army, bringing each man his handful of earth, would make a mound against Samaria higher than the present walls. Thus contemptuously hinting at the ease with which he could overthrow the Israelitish fortifications. The original text is incapable of such a sense.

11. *Tell* him, &c.] For this the LXX. gives "Let it suffice: let not the crooked boast himself as the straight." The latter portion is an attempt (but not very successful) to supply the place of one proverbial saying by another. We convey somewhat of a like sense by 'Praise not the day till the evening.'

For the somewhat antiquated 'harness' the R.V. substitutes **armour.**

12. *as he* was *drinking*] Ben-hadad was clearly full of confidence, and was giving a banquet to the allied princes in anticipation of the victory.

he and the kings] i.e. The thirty and two, mentioned in ver. 1.

in the pavilions] The word is the same which is used for the temporary booths erected of branches of trees at the feast of Tabernacles. Doubtless the tents of Ben-hadad and his princes were of

lions, that he said unto his servants, Set *yourselves in array*. And they set *themselves in array* against the city.

13 And behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou seen all this great multitude? behold, I will deliver it into thine hand
14 *this* day; and thou shalt know that I *am* the LORD. And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the LORD, *Even* by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall order the battle? And he an-

the like kind, for the erection of which material was not difficult to find.

Set yourselves in array] As there is only the verb expressed here, it is possible to substitute as is done in the margin 'the engines' instead of the text. The word is used elsewhere with a noun 'battering-rams' after it (Ezek. iv. 2), but there is nothing in this passage to shew us whether the persons or the engines are referred to. Such elliptical phrases are common among words of command.

The LXX. has rendered 'Build a stockade, and they set a stockade against the city.'

13—21. GOD BY A PROPHET PROMISES THE VICTORY TO AHAB. THE SYRIANS ARE DEFEATED. (Not in Chronicles.)

13. *there came a prophet*] The Hebrew verb is not the common word for 'to come.' The R.V. has therefore translated it here, and in verses 22 and 28, by **came near**, as it is very frequently translated elsewhere in the A.V.

This prophet must have been one of those who were saved at the time of Jezebel's attempt to destroy them all. Obadiah had saved a hundred, and no doubt others also escaped. When Elijah complained 'I, even I only, am left,' the reason was that, through the persecution, a stop had been put to all prophetic activity. In the present strait we need not doubt that any messenger of good tidings would be welcome. So that there is nothing strange about the prophet's visit. The national thoughts were occupied on other things than the slaughter of Jehovah's prophets.

14. *the young men of the princes of the provinces*] The LXX. gives *υἱοὶ τῶν ἡγεμόνων*, 'sons of the leaders', and Josephus nearly the same. 'The princes of the provinces' were probably chieftains who had come from various parts of the kingdom of Israel. The 'young men' would be their attendants or squires. Evidently they are selected as persons who had no great experience though they might have the courage to go, few in number, against a much superior force.

Who shall order the battle] The verb, as is seen from the margin of A.V., means 'to bind' or 'tie'. The R.V. taking this to apply to the bringing of the armies together has rendered **begin**. Instead of remaining within the walls, God encourages Ahab to be the first to strike a

swered, Thou. Then he numbered the young men of the 15
princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and
thirty two: and after them he numbered all the people, *even*
all the children of Israel, *being* seven thousand. And they 16
went out at noon. But Ben-hadad *was* drinking *himself*
drunk in the pavilions, he and the kings, the thirty and two
kings that helped him. And the young men of the princes 17
of the provinces went out first; and Ben-hadad sent out, and
they told him, saying, There are men come out of Samaria.
And he said, Whether they be come out for peace, take 18
them alive; or whether they be come out for war, take them

blow. Humanly speaking, even, such a step was likely to meet with some success. Josephus says Ahab was to lead because of the inexperience of the young men.

15. *Then he numbered* [R.V. **mustered**] *the young men*] The verb occurs several times in this chapter, and is always rendered 'numbered' (see vv. 26, 27 and the two instances in this verse), as indeed it is in nearly all cases in A.V. But looking at verse 27, in comparison with this verse, 'to number' can hardly be correct, for then the operation would have been performed twice over, manifestly a needless proceeding. The verb literally signifies 'to visit', hence 'to hold a visitation, or gathering,' and so 'to muster' appears to represent the sense here very well. See also the note on verse 25 below.

even *all the children of Israel*] The LXX. omits these words. The smallness of the number mentioned (7000) is very remarkable. Josephus only speaks of them as the rest of the army. There were no doubt many more men of war in Israel, but if the number in the text be correct, it must be that Ahab had not been able to bring many soldiers together in the city by reason of the suddenness of the attack, or because so many other persons from the country had crowded into the safest places, and thus there was no room for more.

16. *they went out at noon*] They had probably learnt that the royal banquet was in progress, and the moment would appear a favourable one. When the leaders were giving themselves up to self-indulgence the army would not be well-prepared for action. The words which follow shew that the revelry in the camp of the Syrians had been carried to a perilous length.

17. *and Ben-hadad sent out*] Even in his drunken revelry he is made aware that something unexpected is taking place, and he sends to know exactly what it is. The LXX. says 'they send and announce to the king of Syria', but this is hardly what would take place. When the messengers come back they tell the king that the besieged have taken a new course: 'There are men come out of (R.V. **from**) Samaria;' 'They are not going to wait for our attack, but either come to attack us, or to make proposals for peace'.

18. *take them alive*] Whatever their mission might be Ben-hadad

19 alive. So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city, and the army which followed them.
20 And they slew every one his man: and the Syrians fled; and Israel pursued them: and Ben-hadad the king of Syria
21 escaped on a horse with the horsemen. And the king of Israel went out, and smote the horses and chariots, and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter.
22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel, and said unto him, Go, strengthen thyself, and mark, and see what thou doest: for at the return of the year the king of Syria

had no doubt that his followers could surround them and capture them without fighting. They could have no difficulty in overpowering so insignificant a force. Why he wished for the capture rather than the slaughter of the Israelites is not so evident. It might be only with a view of making it clear that there was no need to cut off any troops sent against them; by mere force of numbers they could overpower them and make them prisoners.

19. *So these young men*, &c.] The R.V. keeps the order of the original and renders **So these went out of the city, the young men**, &c. The LXX. has made this clause part of Ben-hadad's order: 'And let not the young men &c. go forth'.

and the army which followed them] That is, the 7000 mentioned above in verse 15. Apparently the battle was to be commenced by the young men, and the other troops were to come on and increase the alarm caused by the unexpected attack.

20. *on a horse with the horsemen*] The distinction usually drawn between the two Hebrew nouns in this expression is that the first word describes a chariot horse, the second a horse for riding. If this be so (and there seems good ground for the distinction) the king of Syria fled away in such haste that he did not get a proper riding-horse for himself, but took a carriage-horse and on that made his escape among the mounted troops.

21. *And the king of Israel went out*] Ahab's part appears to have been a small one. He seems to have given directions to the young men, and to those that followed them, but himself to have tarried in Samaria, until the rout was seen to have begun.

22—34. THE SYRIANS PREPARE ANOTHER ARMY, AND ARE AGAIN DEFEATED. AHAB MAKES A COVENANT WITH BEN-HADAD. (Not in Chronicles.)

22. *the prophet came to the king*] R.V. **came near** as in vv. 13 and 28. See on 13.

mark, and see] i.e. Take every possible precaution. Look out for what is best to be done.

at the return of the year] i.e. When the fitting season for taking the field has again come round. Cf. 2 Sam. xi. 1, 'after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle'.

will come up against thee. And the servants of the king of 23
Syria said unto him, Their gods *are* gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we; but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they. And do this thing, Take the kings away, every man out of 24
his place, and put captains in their rooms: and number thee 25
an army, like the army that thou hast lost, horse for horse, and chariot for chariot: and we will fight against them in the plain, *and* surely we shall be stronger than they. And he hearkened unto their voice, and did so. And it came to 26
pass at the return of the year, that Ben-hadad numbered the Syrians, and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel. And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all 27

23. *their gods* are *gods*] R.V. **their god is a god.** The LXX. also renders by the singular. The Syrians would speak of the God of Israel as a national divinity, just as they would of their own god. The former battle had been fought in the hill country round about Samaria, and this may have given encouragement to the idea that in a level plain, like that in which their own Damascus lay, the Syrian forces would meet with more success. It was not unnatural, in the heathen ideas about the gods, that they should consider each divinity specially able, and suited, to protect the land over which he was supposed to have the charge.

24. *Take the kings away*] That is, the thirty and two, whose attendance on the court, and the wassail consequent on their presence, had done much harm to the expedition. We need not suppose that these kings were to be deprived of their power and deposed, though the text would bear that interpretation, but only that they were no longer to take part in the war. Their places were to be supplied by those who had made war their trade, and who would give their attention to the battle and not to revelry.

25. *and number thee an army*] Here we have a different verb from that in 15 and in 26, 27. Here the operation is one of numbering, making the force tally exactly in each arm with that which had been gathered in the previous year. The rendering of this verb by 'number' is an additional reason for changing 'number' to muster in the other places.

26. *numbered*] R.V. **mustered,** and so in the next verse. See above on verse 15.

up to Aphek] There were several places of this name. One was at the foot of Lebanon, in the tribe of Asher (see Josh. xiii. 4, xix. 30). Another was in the hill country on the east of the sea of Galilee. But as Ben-hadad's policy was to fight in the plain, the Aphek here intended must be the city of that name which lay in the plain of Jezreel. On the fitness of this place for a large encampment cf. 1 Sam. xxix. 1.

27. *were all present*] The R.V. has adopted the marginal rendering of A.V. **were victualled.** This is the rendering of the Vulg. *cibaria*

present, and went against them: and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids; but the
28 Syrians filled the country. And there came a man of God, and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the LORD, Because the Syrians have said, The LORD *is* God of the hills, but he *is* not God of the valleys, therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall
29 know that I *am* the LORD. And they pitched one over against the other seven days. And *so* it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined: and the children of Israel slew *of* the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day.
30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; and *there* a wall

exceperunt. The passive form of the verb occurs only here, but the active 'to supply with victuals' is found, Gen. xlv. 11, l. 21 and in several other places.

and the children of Israel pitched [R. V. **encamped**] *before them*] The R. V. is a very frequent translation of this word, and seems best when there is no object after the verb. When 'their tents' or some such expression is supplied, then 'pitch' is the more appropriate. The R. V. makes the same change in verse 29.

two little flocks] The rendering 'little flocks' is from the Vulg. 'duo parvi greges'. The LXX. has δύο πολμνια. The Hebrew word does not occur elsewhere.

The Israelite army had adopted a division into two parts, perhaps from the arrangement which had been so successful in the previous attack.

28. *And there came a man of God*] R. V. **And a man of God came near.** See on verse 13 above.

This was probably a different person from the prophet of verses 13 and 22.

and said] This is the same word in the original with that rendered 'and spake' just a few words before. It seems probable, as the verse makes equally good sense without it, that its repetition is due to an error of the scribe. Some versions do not represent it.

the Lord is God] R. V. **a god**, twice in this verse, thus bringing it into accord with the alteration in 23.

29. *seven days*] Perhaps there was some religious idea on the part of the Israelites connected with this time of waiting before they began the battle. After the promise of the man of God, the conflict would have a religious sanction and be entered on with confidence.

an hundred thousand footmen] The number is very large, but Josephus gives the same. If it be correct, the slaughter can hardly have been effected in any other way but by a panic in which these troops cut and trampled down one another.

30. *and* there *a* [R. V. **and the**] *wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the* [R. V. omits *of the*] *men*] The noun is definite in the original, and must refer to the city wall of Aphek. The narrative gives

fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left. And Ben-hadad fled, and came into the city, into an inner chamber. And his servants said unto him, Behold 31
now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings: let us, I pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life. So they girded 32
sackcloth on their loins, and *put* ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel, and said, Thy servant Ben-hadad saith, I pray thee, let me live. And he said, *Is* he yet alive? he *is* my brother. Now the men did diligently observe 33

no clue to the cause of the disaster. But the divine promise of victory seems to warrant us in concluding that it was by divine interposition, through an earthquake it may be, that a destruction so tremendous was wrought among the enemy. The small number of Israel could not have availed even for the slaughter of those who fell in the battle.

And Ben-hadad fled] He was probably on or near the walls when the great disaster occurred, and in terror gat him to the more central parts of the city.

into an inner chamber] Literally, 'a chamber within a chamber'. The LXX. has εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ κοιτῶνος εἰς τὸ ταμιεῖον, 'into the bed-chamber, even into the innermost room'. Josephus says 'an under-ground room'. What is meant is no doubt some room as far removed from the entrance as possible, so that he might be hidden for a good while at all events, and perhaps remain altogether undiscovered.

31. *let us, I* [R. V. **we**] *pray thee*] The change is made because the sentence is in other parts in the plural. The Hebrew נָא is a mere particle employed to give emphasis to forms of entreaty, and has nothing that indicates whether one or more persons are speakers.

sackcloth on our loins] The garment of humiliation and mourning. Cp. Gen. xxxvii. 34; 2 Sam. iii. 31; 2 Kings vi. 30; Is. xxxvii. 1, 2.

ropes upon our heads] Probably meaning with ropes around the neck. No token of submission could be more expressive than this to indicate that Ahab might hang them if he pleased.

peradventure he will save thy life] A touch of Oriental character, which is destroyed by the LXX., which has 'our lives'. The Eastern courtier, even at such a time, would speak of his master's life and not his own. If the former were spared, the latter would be spared also, as a matter of course.

32. Is *he yet alive? he* is *my brother*] Ahab could not know whether Ben-hadad had perished under the falling wall, but as soon as he hears that he is safe, his sympathy is stirred for one of his own rank, and he uses the kingly form of address in speaking of him 'my brother'. Cf. above on ix. 13.

33. *the men did diligently observe whether* any thing would come *from him, and did hastily catch* it] R. V. **the men observed diligently**

whether *any thing would come* from him, and did hastily catch *it:* and they said, Thy brother Ben-hadad. Then he said, Go ye, bring him. Then Ben-hadad came forth to
34 him; and he caused him to come up into the chariot. And *Ben-hadad* said unto him, The cities, which my father took from thy father, I will restore; and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria. Then *said Ahab*, I will send thee away with *this* covenant. So he made a covenant with him, and sent him away.

and hasted to catch whether it were his mind. There are several difficulties in this verse. The italics of A. V. being omitted, we have an expression meaning 'whether from him'. This the R. V. takes as 'whether it were his mind', his true intention, to regard Ben-hadad in this friendly way. The first verb is used several times of divination by augury (cf. 2 Kings xvii. 17, xxi. 6). Hence the sense of 'diligent observation' (see Gen. xliv. 5, marg. A. V.). Some have taken the word as implying a favourable omen, and so rendered 'they took it as a good sign'. But this further meaning is no necessary part of the sense. The other verb rendered 'to catch' is only found here, and has nothing in Hebrew, or even in the cognate languages, to explain it. The traditional Jewish explanation is 'they hasted to get him to say clearly'. The LXX. and the Vulg. give the sense of 'to catch'; the former translating by ἀνελέξαντο, the latter by 'rapuerunt'. Josephus represents the messengers as taking a pledge (ὅρκους λαβόντες) from Ahab that there should be no harm done to their master. The R. V. seems to have improved a little upon the A. V., and the following words 'Thy brother Ben-hadad' shew on what point the Syrians were anxious for confirmation.

into the chariot] The war chariot in which Ahab had come forth to the battle. For the whole proceeding appears to have taken place immediately after the Syrian overthrow.

34. This verse is very singular from the omission of the names of both the speakers. It is clear enough from the sense, to whom each clause must be assigned, but the omissions are so unusual that one can hardly help suspecting some error in the text. The LXX. joins the two clauses as though they were spoken by the same person.

make streets for thee in Damascus] This must signify that a portion of Damascus should be set apart as belonging to Israel, and that dwellings might be erected there for the use of such Israelites as should have need to go thither. That such a privileged quarter in a foreign city might be of great use for purposes of commerce we can readily imagine, and more so in those days and lands of caravans than in the western world. Probably 'Lombard Street' in London was originally a privileged part of the city, where the wealthy Lombard merchants established themselves.

Then, said Ahab, *I will send thee away*] R. V., **And I**, said Ahab, **will let thee go.** The verb is rendered 'to let go' in the application

And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto 35
his neighbour in the word of the LORD, Smite me, I pray
thee. And the man refused to smite him. Then said he 36
unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the
LORD, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion
shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him,
a lion found him, and slew him. Then he found another 37

made by the son of the prophets in verse 42. It is better therefore to translate it in the same way here, and in the following clause of this verse **'and let him go'**.

with this covenant] The agreement, namely, for the restoration of the taken cities, and for the privilege of occupying part of Damascus with houses for Israelites. The language sets before us the easy way in which Ahab allowed the advantages of the victory to slip from his grasp. It seems too that Ben-hadad did not fulfil all his part of the covenant (see xxii. 3), and this may have been in consequence of the behaviour of Ahab, which would make the compact appear of little moment.

35—43. A PROPHETIC MESSAGE REBUKING AHAB BECAUSE HE HAD LET BEN-HADAD GO. (Not in Chronicles.)

35. *a certain man of the sons of the prophets*] It is clear from what follows in the history (2 Kings ii.) about the taking of Elijah into heaven, that in spite of Jezebel's persecution, the prophets and their schools were not put down, but still flourished in various places. Josephus represents this 'son of the prophets' as Micaiah, spoken of in xxii. 8, and says that it was in consequence of this message about Ben-hadad's deliverance that Ahab put him in prison. (*Ant.* VIII. 14. 5.)

said unto his neighbour in [R.V. **fellow by**] *the word of the Lord*] The man to whom he made the request was probably one who like himself dwelt in one of the prophetic societies, and he ought therefore to have understood that there was some purpose in his companion's request. Hence his sin in refusing to comply with it. 'Fellow' gives the idea of men of the same guild better than 'neighbour'. The expression 'by the word of the Lord' is found in a similar passage (1 Kings xiii. 17), and is the more usual form.

Smite me] He wished to personate a man who had been engaged in the battle and had suffered something from the enemy.

the man refused] Such a refusal was utterly at variance with the character of a prophet, who was to be prepared to obey at all costs a message which came as the word of the Lord. His companion puts the case very strongly in the next verse when he calls his own request 'the voice of the Lord'.

36. *a lion*] On the frequency of wild beasts in the Holy Land at this time, see above on xiii. 24. The incident here recorded is not without its importance as a comment on disobedience to God's command, for which a punishment was just to be pronounced against Ahab.

man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man smote
38 him, so that in smiting he wounded *him*. So the prophet
departed, and waited for the king by the way, and disguised
39 himself with ashes upon his face. And as the king passed
by, he cried unto the king: and he said, Thy servant went
out into the midst of the battle; and behold, a man turned
aside, and brought a man unto me, and said, Keep this
man: if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be
40 for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver. And as
thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone. And
the king of Israel said unto him, So *shall* thy judgement *be;*

37. *so that in smiting he wounded* him] The R. V. has adopted the literal rendering which stands on the margin of A. V. **smiting and** wounding him. Josephus specifies the nature of the wound *θραύσαντος αὐτοῦ τὸ κράνιον* 'breaking his head'. This of course is to be inferred from what follows.

38. *waited for the king by the way*] He wished to intercept Ahab just as he was coming from his interview with Ben-hadad. A parallel this to the lion meeting the disobedient prophet as soon as he had departed from his fellow.

and disguised himself] With this action may be compared the assumed mourning garb of the widow of Tekoah (2 Sam. xiv. 2).

with ashes upon his face] R. V. **with his head band over his eyes.** The A. V. is the rendering of the Vulg. and Syriac, and is the result of taking אֵפֶר in the text as the same אֵפֶר which means 'dust', 'ashes'. The LXX. has the true sense in *τελαμών*=a bandage, while the Chaldee translates it as 'a veil'. When the proper meaning is given to the first word, the common rendering 'eyes' for the second can be brought in.

39. *cried unto the king*] The appeal for the king's intervention is made with a view of getting free from the punishment which had been threatened to him.

a man turned aside] Evidently meant to indicate one of authority who had a right to command the services which he desires and to impose a penalty if they be not fulfilled. In the interpretation he represents Jehovah.

be missing] i.e. When I come to ask for the prisoner whom I trusted to your hands.

a talent of silver] The fine was large to mark the importance of the trust.

40. *he was gone*] The sentence would of course continue thus: 'Let me however find grace and let not thy servant suffer for this neglect'.

So shall *thy judgement* be] i.e. As he laid down who entrusted his prisoner to thy care. The LXX. rendering here is utterly without sense, and it is impossible to conceive whence it was derived, *ἰδοὺ καὶ τὰ ἔνεδρα παρ' ἐμοὶ ἐφόνευσας.*

thyself hast decided *it*. And he hasted, and took the ashes 41
away from his face; and the king of Israel discerned him
that he *was* of the prophets. And he said unto him, Thus 42
saith the LORD, Because thou hast let go out of *thy* hand a
man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore thy
life shall go for his life, and thy people for his people. And 43
the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased,
and came to Samaria.

And it came to pass after these things, *that* Naboth the 21
Jezreelite had a vineyard, which *was* in Jezreel, hard by

41. *the ashes away from his face*] Here R. V. (as in 38) **the head band from his eyes.**

that he was *of the prophets*] It is clear that the prophets were distinguished by dress, or in some evident manner, so that they were easy of recognition. Perhaps the hairy prophetic mantle was the usual garb, and that on the present occasion the prophet had some wrapping thrown over that, which he laid aside along with the head band, and then the king recognised his character.

out of thy *hand*] The LXX. represents the pronoun, which is omitted in the Hebrew text, perhaps only by a slip of the scribe.

42. *a man*] R. V. **the man.** For the whole multitude, and of course the king above all, had been delivered into Ahab's hand (see verse 28), and the victory was to be an evidence that Jehovah had fought for Israel.

appointed to utter destruction] R. V. **devoted to destruction.** This was the purpose for which Ben-hadad had been brought into Ahab's hand. The literal rendering is 'the man of my banning', whom I have laid under a ban. It is used Is. xxxiv. 5 'the people of my curse'.

43. *heavy and displeased*] Said again of Ahab in the next chapter (verse 4) when he could not prevail upon Naboth to part with his vineyard. The first of these words is used in xxi. 5 to signify sadness of spirit, the second indicates anger arising from disappointment. It describes the sort of rage which Asa exhibited (2 Chron. xvi. 10) when he put Hanani in prison for telling him that he had done wrong in relying on the help of the Syrians instead of trusting in the Lord.

CH. XXI. **1—16.** NABOTH THE JEZREELITE IS STONED TO DEATH AND AHAB TAKES POSSESSION OF HIS VINEYARD. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. This chapter is placed by the LXX. before the preceding, and numbered xx. Josephus also adopts that order of the events. In consequence, the LXX. omits the words 'after these things' in verse 1.

The LXX. (*Alex.*) calls Naboth 'an Israelite'. This of course he was. But *Jezreel* יזרעאל may easily, especially in MS., be mistaken for *Israel* ישראל. Both versions of the LXX. make the vineyard to be not near the *palace*, but near the *threshingfloor* of Ahab.

2 the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. And Ahab spake
unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may
have it for a garden of herbs, because it *is* near unto my
house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than
it; *or*, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of
3 it *in* money. And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid
it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto
4 thee. And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased
because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken
to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance
of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and
5 turned away his face, and would eat no bread. But Jezebel
his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit

2. *that I may have it for a garden of herbs*] These events must have taken place during a time of peace, when Ahab had leisure to think about the convenient arrangement of his grounds. And it is most probable they occurred after Ben-hadad's utter defeat, otherwise the victory then granted to Ahab would have been like a condonation of his sin, and not in harmony with the doom pronounced in this chapter (ver. 19) by Elijah. The desire to have the ground 'for a garden of herbs' is twice repeated in this verse by the LXX.

3. *The Lord forbid it me*] This verse is very interesting, because (1) it makes clear that Naboth was a worshipper of Jehovah and, in spite of the persecution of the prophets, did not shrink from making it known to the king by his language. Here was an example of one who had not bowed the knee nor given a kiss to Baal. And (2) the reason which he alleges for clinging to his inheritance shews that the teaching of the law of Moses (Numb. xxxvi. 7, 8; Lev. xxv. 27, 28) concerning the sacredness of a paternal inheritance had taken firm hold of the minds of the people, so that Ahab did not think of venturing on harsh measures against one who put forward this religious plea as a bar to the royal desire.

4. *And Ahab came into his house*] The last four words are omitted by the LXX., as also the clause 'because of the word.....the inheritance of my fathers.' It is clear from the continuation of the story that it was to Samaria that Ahab came back after his interview with Naboth.

heavy and displeased] See above, on xx. 43.

And he laid him down, &c.] This detail shews, like so much else in Ahab's history, what a feeble character he was, and how thoroughly he would be dominated by the more powerful mind of Jezebel. While absent from her, some signs of improvement might appear, even such as might seem to Elijah to promise hopes of a change; but when she appears they are all gone. And the moodiness here described is rather that of a wayward child, than of a man of mature years and high position.

so sad, that thou eatest no bread? And he said unto her, 6
Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto
him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or *else*, if it please
thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he
answered, I will not give thee my vineyard. And Jezebel 7
his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom
of Israel? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry:
I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite. So 8
she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed *them* with his
seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles

6. *I will not give thee my vineyard*] For the last two words the LXX. has 'the inheritance of my fathers.' Of course it is to be understood that Ahab would lay before Jezebel the motive, from which Naboth had refused his king's request. But the narrative is much more in character with the rest of Ahab's behaviour, if he at first makes mention only of the blank refusal. The ground for holding firm to his inheritance would most likely have found an echo in many an Israelite's heart. We see that Jezebel gives no hint to any one of the true cause for wishing to put Naboth out of the way. Had she done so, she must have mentioned the reason for his scruple, and the elders of Jezreel though they had forgotten the laws of Jehovah, would, for all that, not have cared to give publicity to Naboth's answer.

7. *Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?*] There is not expressed here any sign of a question in the original, but there can be no doubt that this is the force of the words. The Hebrew order is 'Thou now governest, &c.' the pronoun being emphatically expressed. So that the sense is '*Thou* art king, art thou not? why then let such a matter trouble thee or stand in the way of thy will.' The proposal of some to take the words as imperative, 'Thou, do thou use thy sovereignty, &c.' is opposed to what follows. For Jezebel does not urge Ahab to act the despot's part, but plays it for him.

I will give thee, &c.] The 'I' in this clause is emphatically expressed, just as 'thou' in the preceding one.

8. *she wrote letters in Ahab's name*] She was the real ruler, he only king in name. The letters would be prepared for her by the royal secretaries. Jezebel's part was to take the signet ring of her husband, and therewith affix the royal seal that the document might go forth with authority. Apparently Ahab asked no question about the means which his wife meant to employ.

the elders and to the nobles] The law ordered (Deut. xvi. 18) that there should be judges appointed in every city, and we cannot doubt the existence of such a tribunal in a place so important as Jezreel, where the elders and nobles would form the bench of magistrates. The sequel shews that for such an offence as that charged against Naboth they had the power of life and death. But the whole proceeding is very Oriental. The royal letter dictates the sentence, and how it is to be obtained, and

9 that *were* in his city, dwelling with Naboth. And she wrote
in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Naboth on
10 high among the people: and set two men, sons of Belial,
before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst
blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and

the persons to whom it is addressed make no scruple about obeying, although the last words of this verse increase the enormity of their proceeding by telling that they 'were in his city, dwelling with Naboth', and so it would seem well acquainted with his character.

The words 'in his city' are omitted in the LXX.

9. *Proclaim a fast*] Let a day of humiliation be appointed, for it must be represented that a great wrong has been committed both against God and the king. Cf. 1 Sam. vii. 6 where the people gathered at Mizpeh fasted, saying, 'We have sinned against the Lord'. The command of God (Joel ii. 12) by His prophet is, 'Turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting and with weeping'. Hence the action is to express the popular sorrow for some wrong done, by which the whole city is contaminated.

and set Naboth on high among the people] Lit. 'at the head of the people'. The LXX. has ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ λαοῦ. He was to be put in a prominent place, as one who had hitherto held an honourable position. Josephus speaks of him as γένους ἐπιφανοῦς 'of a family of note'. By thus, at the beginning of the process, treating Naboth with honour they would seem to make it plain that, but for the evidence against him, they would have been glad to think him innocent.

10. *sons of Belial*] In Deut. xiii. 13, the R.V. has translated this expression 'base fellows', putting in the margin 'sons of worthlessness'. This is the sense everywhere in the O.T. and should have been in the text. In N.T. times 'Belial' was personified (see 2 Cor. vi. 15), but there is no trace of this idea in the earlier Scriptures. The LXX. has υἱοὶ παρανόμων. The men were good-for-noughts, who would swear to anything for which they were paid. Josephus makes them three in number.

Thou didst blaspheme [R.V. curse] *God and the king*] The verb in the original ברך is very frequently used of blessing, but it had the opposite sense also. The root idea appears to be 'to say adieu to'. This might be and most frequently was with a parting benediction; but it also might be a renunciation, a declaration of hostility. Hence the R.V. has put 'renounce' in the margin, to indicate how the sense of 'curse' is obtained. The verb is used in the bad sense also in Job i. 5; ii. 9. It is remarkable that an accusation of this nature should have been set afoot by Jezebel. We need not however assume that she had any care about the cursing of God; only that she found this the first convenient mode of getting rid of Naboth. But amongst the people, who were to suppose Naboth justly executed, there must have still been left some regard for the divine name and the divine law. The death by stoning was appointed by the Mosaic code (Lev. xxiv. 16), and

stone him, that he may die. And the men of his city, *even* 11
the elders and the nobles who *were* the inhabitants in his
city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them, *and* as *it was* written
in the letters which she had sent unto them. They pro- 12
claimed a fast, and set Naboth on high among the people.
And there came in two men, children of Belial, who sat 13
before him: and the men of Belial witnessed against him,
even against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying,
Naboth did blaspheme God and the king. Then they
carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with
stones, that he died. Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, 14
Naboth is stoned, and is dead. And it came to pass, when 15
Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that
Jezebel said to Ahab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard

so was the necessity for two witnesses at least (Deut. xvii. 6; xix. 15) before the accused could be put to death.

that he may die] The R.V. omits 'may'.

11. *who* were *the inhabitants*] R.V. **who dwelt.** The word is the same as in verse 8.

13. *And there came in two men, children of Belial*] R.V. **And the two men, sons of Belial, came in.** The Hebrew noun is definite and the sense requires that it should be indicated.

witnessed] R.V. **bare witness.** As in verse 10.

even *against Naboth, in the presence of the people*] These words are omitted by the LXX. As much publicity as possible was given to the accusation, that thus it might have the colour of being legally carried out.

did blaspheme] R.V. **did curse.** The word is the same as in verse 10. But a different word is used for 'blaspheme' in Lev. xxiv. 16.

they carried him forth out of the city] This explains what is meant by 'carry him out' in verse 10. The place of execution was to be outside the walls, according to the legal ordinance (Lev. xxiv. 14), 'Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp...and let all the congregation stone him'. From this we see that this enactment was before the Exile.

that he died] Not only was Naboth put to death, but, according to another passage (2 Kings ix. 26), his sons were included in the destruction.

15. *that Naboth was stoned, and was dead*] These words are omitted by the LXX. The repetition is alien to Greek style, but exactly after the fashion of Hebrew.

take possession of the vineyard] Some have thought that the king could do this, because it is supposed that the property of one so executed would become confiscated. Others have suggested that there was some relationship between Ahab and the family of Naboth. It seems unnecessary to seek for reasons in such a case. Where so much had been

of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for
16 money: for Naboth is not alive, but dead. And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it.
17 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite,
18 saying, Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which *is* in Samaria: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Naboth,
19 whither he is gone down to possess it. And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak

done unlawfully, and a life, or perhaps several, taken by false accusation, it would be a small matter to seize on the ground without any plea of law or kinship.

16. *when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead*] Here the LXX. adds 'he rent his garments and covered himself with sackcloth'. This clause must be entirely out of place. Josephus gives us a detail far more in harmony with Ahab's character. He says (*Ant.* VIII. 13, 8) 'And Ahab was pleased with what had been done, and sprang up from his bed, and went to see Naboth's vineyard'. There was certainly no time lost by him. His entry on the possession seems to have been made the very next day after Naboth's death. We learn afterwards (2 Kings ix. 26) that Jehu and Bidkar rode with Ahab at the time, and so appalling was the curse which Elijah pronounced on the wretched king that it was imprinted on Jehu's memory and he could quote it many years afterwards, apparently in its very words.

17—29. ELIJAH MEETS AHAB AND TELLS HIM GOD'S SENTENCE. AHAB REPENTS AND THE PUNISHMENT IS DEFERRED. (Not in Chronicles.)

18. *which* is [R.V. **dwelleth**] *in Samaria*] This change is necessary for consistency in the narrative. There is no verb in the original, as will be seen from the italics of A. V. The verbs describing the action first of Ahab and then of Elijah, shew that both had *gone down*, the one from Samaria, and the other, perhaps, from Carmel, to the city of Jezreel, which lay on lower ground than either.

to possess it] R.V. **to take possession of it.** Thus it is shewn that the expression is the same as in verses 15, 16 and 19.

19. *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?*] The guilt of all that had been done is at once laid at Ahab's door. He had neither known nor cared to know (as it seems) what Jezebel's plans were and only thought of the end which they accomplished. He was willing by taking possession to reap the advantage, as he thought it; God lays on him the first penalty.

and thou shalt speak unto him, saying] The LXX. omits these words. See above on verse 15.

unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine. And Ahab said to Elijah, Hast thou found me, 20
O mine enemy? And he answered, I have found *thee:* because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the LORD, behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take 21
away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab *him that* pisseth against the wall, and *him that is* shut up and left in

In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth] From the history of Ahab's death, in xxii. 38, it appears that his blood was thus licked by the dogs, not at Jezreel, but near Samaria. The best explanation of this is that the word 'place' does not here mean 'precise locality'. Naboth's blood was shed outside the gate of Jezreel, and the pool of Samaria, from the description in the next chapter, and from what we know of the conduits and reservoirs of Eastern cities, was apparently outside the gate of that city. Thus there was a similarity between the two cases. We must also bear in mind that the sentence on Ahab was modified and its exact fulfilment deferred. When Jehoram was killed (2 Kings ix. 25) a much more definite phrase is used for the place where his body was cast out. There it is, 'in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite'.

Instead of 'dogs' simply, the LXX. (*Vat.*) has 'the swine and the dogs' and (*Alex.*) 'the dogs and the swine'. It is not easy to decide how the swine came to be mentioned in the Greek Versions, but as neither text makes any mention of them in the second part of this clause, the words must be taken as the insertion of some one who desired to give a touch of greater horror to the picture.

The *Vat.* LXX. adds to the close of this verse 'and the harlots shall wash in thy blood', and in xxii. 38 both *Alex.* and *Vat.* have the statement that this was done. Moreover the true rendering in that place, of the words which in A.V. read, 'and they washed his armour', is 'Now the harlots washed themselves there'. See notes on xxii. 38.

20. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy*] Ahab had not thought of a penalty to overtake him, but the sight of Elijah makes him feel not penitent, but indignant that the avenger of wrong is so soon at hand. Therefore he calls Elijah his *enemy*.

because thou hast sold thyself] Here the LXX. adds μάτην=in vain. This appears to be an attempt at interpretation, indicating that Ahab had thought to take the price for his bargain, and to escape all consequences, and that in this he was to be disappointed. The complete surrender of the king into the hands of others is well expressed by 'thou hast sold thyself'.

to work evil] R.V. **to do that which is evil.** As in all other places where this expression occurs.

in the sight of the Lord] Here the LXX. adds 'to provoke him to anger'.

21. *and will take away thy posterity*] R.V. **and will utterly sweep thee away.** See above on xiv. 10, where this verse occurs in substance.

and left in Israel] R.V. **and him that is left at large.** The ex-

22 Israel, and will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam
the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of
Ahijah, for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked
23 *me* to anger, and made Israel to sin. And of Jezebel also
spake the LORD, saying, The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the
24 wall of Jezreel. Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the
dogs shall eat; and him that dieth in the field shall the
25 fowls of the air eat. (But there was none like unto Ahab,
which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the
26 LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very
abominably in following idols, according to all *things* as did

pression is a proverbial one, meant to indicate all men of every kind. Perhaps its origin is in the idea of 'bondmen and free' or it may have been 'the young, who were not their own masters, and the old who were at liberty to choose their own way.' The expression recalls Deut. xxxii. 36.

22. *and made* [R.V. **hast made**] *Israel to sin*] Cf. xvi. 2.

23. *the dogs shall eat Jezebel*] For the fulfilment, see 2 Kings ix. 35—37.

by the wall [R.V. **rampart**] *of Jezreel*] The Hebrew word which stands here in the text is found again 2 Sam. xx. 15, where it is translated 'trench', with a margin in A.V. 'outmost wall'. The R.V. gives there also 'rampart'. In 2 Kings ix. 10, 36, 37, the body is said to have been devoured 'in the portion of Jezreel', and as the words 'by the rampart' בחל, want only an additional letter to turn them into 'in the portion' בחלק, it has been suggested that the latter ought to be the reading here. But there is no need for any change. Both expressions mean the same thing. The 'portion' is the land close to the walls outside. Jezebel must have looked forth from a window of some building that formed part of the city wall. Thus she would be able to shew herself to Jehu as soon as he drew near.

24. *Him that dieth* &c.] See above, xiv. 11.

25. *to work wickedness*] R.V. **to do that which was evil.** See above, verse 20.

Ahab exceeded the wickedness of all the other kings in that he introduced Baal-worship, and allowed his wife to proceed to all lengths in her attempts to destroy any recognition of Jehovah, even such as remained in the corrupted worship of the northern kingdom.

26. *he did very abominably*] Ahab himself cast aside the worship which his predecessors had inaugurated and followed, and followed Jezebel in her idolatry.

according to all things *as did the Amorites*] Better, with R.V., **according to all that the Amorites did.** The Amorites are mentioned probably because, being widely spread, the name had become representative of all the nations cast out before the children of Israel. They were the

the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel). And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those 27
words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly.
And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, 28
saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? 29
because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: *but* in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.

And they continued three years without war between 22

dwellers on the hills, like the Hittite and the Jebusite. It may therefore be that the Amorite worship and customs had lingered in the hill country of Samaria, and been revived during the idolatrous reign of Ahab.

whom the Lord cast out] The R.V. has usually changed 'cast' into 'drave' in these passages. See xiv. 24. There seems no reason why it should not be done here.

27. The LXX. gives for this verse 'And when Ahab was pricked (in his heart) on account of this word (coming) from the presence of the Lord, he went and wept, and rent his robe, and girded sackcloth upon his body, and fasted. And he put on sackcloth in the day on which he slew Naboth the Jezreelite, and went [softly]'. There is nothing to represent the last word, which is in brackets, and thus the sentence is incomplete. Josephus explains that the king went barefoot. On the mention of the day of Naboth's murder, see above on verse 16.

29. *because he humbleth himself before me*] These words are left out by the LXX., as are also 'upon his house' at the close of the verse.

I will not bring the evil in his days] That is, the whole penalty shall not be inflicted on him. A portion of it was, as we are told in xxii. 37—38. The Jews explain the word נִשָּׂא which is rendered 'forgiving' iniquity (Exod. xxxiv. 7; Num. xiv. 18; &c.) by reference to its original meaning which is 'to lift up'. God, say they, raises the load, so that it does not press all at once, or men would perish under it, but the lifted burden is divided into parts, and men feel it in consequence for a long time to come. In every punishment of Israel, there is mixed up an ounce of the golden calf.

but *in his son's days*] Fulfilled in the death of Jehoram, Ahab's son. 2 Kings ix. 25.

CH. XXII. 1—12. AHAB RESOLVES TO RECOVER RAMOTH-GILEAD. JEHOSHAPHAT JOINS HIM. AHAB'S PROPHETS PROMISE HIM VICTORY. (2 Chron. xviii. 1—11.)

1. *they continued three years without war*] This probably means after the defeat of Benhadad described in chapter xx. It must have been during this interval of peace that Naboth was put to death.

2 Syria and Israel. And it came to pass on the third year,
that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king
3 of Israel. And the king of Israel said unto his servants,
Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, and we *be* still,
4 and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria? And
he said unto Jehoshaphat, Wilt thou go with me to battle
to Ramoth-gilead? And Jehoshaphat said to the king of
Israel, I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, my horses
5 as thy horses. And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of
Israel, Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the LORD to day.

2. *Jehoshaphat...came down to the king of Israel*] The writer speaks as though Jerusalem was still regarded as the capital-city of the whole nation. To leave it and go elsewhere was 'to go down.'

The Chronicler and Josephus connect this visit with the mention of Jehoshaphat's 'affinity with' Ahab. Jehoram, Jehoshaphat's son had married Ahab's daughter, Athaliah. And after this event the king of Judah paid his visit to Samaria. The reception is described in Chronicles as a scene of great profusion, and Josephus speaks of troops (στρατὸς) which accompanied Jehoshaphat. Probably the subject of the war against Syria had been discussed before the meeting of the two kings. The Chronicler says 'Ahab *persuaded* Jehoshaphat to go up with him to Ramoth-gilead.'

3. *Know ye that Ramoth in Gilead* is *ours*] The statement of Josephus (*Ant.* VIII. 15, 3) is very probable, viz. that the father of Ben-hadad had taken Ramoth-gilead, with other cities, from Omri. Ben-hadad had stipulated, when he feared for his life (xx. 34), to restore these conquests, but apparently had not carried out this part of his covenant. He had found Ahab easy to deal with, and once safe back in Damascus, he thought former promises not very binding.

On Ramoth-gilead, see above, iv. 13.

4. *I* am *as thou* art] The marriage between the royal children would no doubt make Jehoshaphat more ready to comply with Ahab's request. But it was not without danger to Judah also, that the Syrian king should hold a strong position in the land of Gilead.

my horses as thy horses] From this expression it appears that cavalry had now been largely introduced into both kingdoms.

5. *Inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord*] The persuasion has gained from him a promise, but Jehoshaphat would still find out whether the proposed expedition has the sanction of Jehovah. It is clear from his request that he expected to find a true prophet of Jehovah at hand in Israel. The national apostasy cannot therefore have been complete, even in the dark days of Ahab.

to day] The Hebrew word is the same which is found in Gen. xxv. 31, 33, where on the margin of R.V. the alternative rendering, 'first of all,' is given. This sense is very appropriate both there and here, and will often explain what 'to day' in O. Test. diction signifies. Cf. above, i. 51.

Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about 6
four hundred men, and said unto them, Shall I go against
Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said,
Go up; for the Lord shall deliver *it* into the hand of the
king. And Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of 7
the LORD besides, that we might inquire of him? And the 8
king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, *There is* yet one man,
Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom *we* may inquire of the
LORD: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good

6. *gathered the prophets together, about four hundred*] These cannot have been the prophets of Baal, for their ringleader, Zedekiah, in verse 11, begins his speech, 'Thus saith Jehovah,' and in verse 24 speaks of 'the spirit of Jehovah' as being with him. But they were not true adherents of the Lord, otherwise Jehoshaphat would certainly have been content with their words. He went on with the project of the expedition even after Micaiah's prophetic warning; he never would have sought for more satisfaction, had he heard four hundred true prophets of Jehovah say, 'the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.' These men were therefore the prophets who served in the worship of the calves. They would use Jehovah's name, just as constantly as the men who had not forsaken His commandment, and throughout the whole of Israel this number of them could no doubt be readily gathered, and these, though not his Baal-priests, Ahab would bring before Jehoshaphat.

Go up] The land of Gilead was all mountainous.

the Lord shall deliver it] It is remarkable that in this first form of answer, the word for "Lord" is *Adonai*, not the word which we represent by *Jehovah*, and which is generally rendered Lord. In the repetition, in verse 12, *Jehovah* is used, and of course in Micaiah's speech. This word 'Adonai' is what the Jews use now instead of pronouncing the sacred name, but their reason could not have weighed with Ahab's priests in Israel. In the parallel place in Chronicles 'God', *Elohim*, is used in the first answer, and 'Jehovah' in the others.

7. Is there *not here a prophet of the Lord besides*] The R.V. transposes *besides*, putting it after *here*. This brings out more clearly the reason for Jehoshaphat's inquiry. Besides what he has heard, he would gladly be told what to do by a true prophet of Jehovah. These men and their answer did not quite satisfy him. Josephus says Jehoshaphat understood from their language that they were false prophets.

8. There is *yet one man*] In the R.V. immediately after these words are placed 'by whom we may inquire of the Lord.' This order of words, which corresponds more nearly with the Hebrew arrangement, shews that Ahab understood what his guest required, and why he was not satisfied with the prophets that had already come before him. Even Ahab recognized the difference between Micaiah and the rest.

concerning me, but evil. And Jehoshaphat said, Let not
9 the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer,
10 and said, Hasten *hither* Micaiah the son of Imlah. And
the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat
each on his throne, having put on *their* robes, in a void
place *in* the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the
11 prophets prophesied before them. And Zedekiah the son
of Chenaanah made him horns of iron: and he said, Thus
saith the LORD, With these shalt thou push the Syrians,

Let not the king say so] i.e. That he hates Micaiah.

9. *Hasten* hither] R.V. **Fetch quickly.** This is the rendering in Chronicles, and enables us to dispense with italics.

10. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the king of Israel*] The change is justified, as the sentence is not a mere addition to what has gone before but a new feature in the history.

having put on their *robes*] R.V. **arrayed in their robes.** The original language indicates a degree of display suited to the meeting of two kings. Moreover the A. V., in connexion with the words immediately following, is open to a misunderstanding. What is described is not what the kings did, but in what state they sat. The LXX. has ἔνοπλοι. Josephus also gives the idea of an armed gathering. He says 'The two kings having gone out of the city, and having sat down each on his throne, distributed to their own soldiers pay for the campaign (τὸ στρατιωτικόν).'

in a void [R.V. **an open**] *place*] The word in the Hebrew is most frequently rendered 'a threshing-floor.' This was a large open space in which the oxen could be driven round, to tread out the corn. Such a space is here indicated, where chairs of state could be erected for the two kings, and where the prophets could come about them.

in [R.V. **at**] *the entrance of the gate of Samaria*] There appears usually to have been some place set apart near the gate of a city, mostly outside, where important business proceedings, trials, and such matters could be conducted in public and where kings and magistrates could sit and listen to appeals for help or justice. Cf. Gen. xxiii. 10, 18; Josh. ii. 7, ix. 29; 2 Kings xxiii. 8, &c.

11. *Zedekiah*] In verse 24 we see that Zedekiah was the leader of Ahab's prophets. His action here is one of those symbolical proceedings not uncommon with the prophets. Thus Ahijah significantly rent his garment into twelve pieces (xi. 30) and gave Jeroboam ten. Zedekiah's language, addressed to Ahab, is probably an allusion to the blessing of Ephraim in Deut. xxxiii. 17. By this time Ephraim had become the representative tribe of the Northern Kingdom, and of him Moses had said 'his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth.' By such language not only Ahab, but Jehoshaphat might be encouraged to trust more to the prophecies of success.

until *thou* have consumed them. And all the prophets 12
prophesied so, saying, Go up *to* Ramoth-gilead, and prosper:
for the LORD shall deliver *it* into the king's hand.

And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake 13
unto him, saying, Behold now, the words of the prophets
declare good unto the king *with* one mouth: let thy word, I
pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak *that
which is* good. And Micaiah said, *As* the LORD liveth, 14
what the LORD saith unto me, that will I speak. So he 15
came to the king. And the king said unto him, Micaiah,
shall we go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we for-
bear? And he answered him, Go, and prosper: for the

until thou *have consumed them*] R.V. **until they be consumed.** There is nothing in the original to warrant 'thou.'

12. *into the king's hand*] R.V. **into the hand of the king.** A change made to shew that the words are just the same as in verse 6. The LXX. adds here 'even the king of Syria.'

13—28. MICAIAH'S PROPHECY. AHAB, IN DISPLEASURE, SENDS HIM TO PRISON. (2 Chron. xviii. 12—27.)

13. *And the messenger that was gone* [R.V. **went**] *to call Micaiah*] The tradition, which Josephus preserves, that the 'son of the prophets' mentioned in xx. 35, was Micaiah, and that Ahab put him in prison for his actions at that time (see notes on xx. 35, 43) has been derived from the circumstance that Micaiah on this occasion was sent to prison, and the king uses the words (verse 26) 'Take Micaiah and carry him *back*,' &c. But there is nothing in this account of the message to him which proves that he was in prison when Ahab sent to call him; and 'Put this fellow in prison' (verse 27) is no evidence that he had been there before, but rather the reverse.

speak that which is *good*] R.V. **speak thou good.** This is the A.V. in 2 Chronicles.

14. *what the Lord saith*] In 2 Chron. xviii. 13 it is 'what my God saith.'

15. *So he came to the king. And the king said*] R.V. **And when he was come to the king, the king said.** Conforming to 2 Chron. where the Hebrew is precisely the same. The change also represents the events in rather more close sequence, as no doubt they happened.

Micaiah, shall we go against [R.V. **to**] *Ramoth-gilead*] Another slight variation to make Kings and Chronicles accord, as closely as they do in the original.

Go, [R.V. **Go up**] *and prosper*] The words are the same as were used by the other prophets in verse 6. Ahab had however asked his question this time in the plural number, 'Shall *we* go?' and in 2 Chron. Micaiah's answer is given in accordance therewith 'Go ye up,' &c.

It is quite clear from the tone of Ahab's language in the next verse,

16 LORD shall deliver *it* into the hand of the king. And the king said unto him, How many times shall I adjure thee that thou tell me nothing but *that which is* true in the name 17 of the LORD? And he said, I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd: and the LORD said, These have no master: let them return every man to 18 his house in peace. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy 19 no good concerning me, but evil? And he said, Hear thou

that, though Micaiah, in words, repeated what had been said by Ahab's own prophets, yet by tone and gesture he made it evident that his speech was not in earnest.

16. *How many times shall I adjure thee*] It would seem from this that Ahab on former occasions had consulted Micaiah, and been dissatisfied with his answers.

that thou tell me nothing but that which is *true*] R.V. **that thou speak unto me nothing but the truth.** This is very nearly the form in 2 Chron. in A.V. The Hebrew is exactly the same. And both are in R.V. made to agree.

17. *And he said*] Here the LXX. adds οὐχ οὕτως, 'Not so,' and there is a similar insertion at the beginning of verse 19, where see note.

I saw all Israel] Here Micaiah in true prophetic tone relates a vision which foretells the utter ruin of the coming expedition.

scattered upon the hills] R.V. **mountains.** This is A.V. in 2 Chronicles, and the change gives a sense of greater dispersion. But in any case the two places should be alike.

as sheep that have not a [R.V. **no**] *shepherd*] Again the rendering in 2 Chronicles is adopted. The language of Micaiah spake in no doubtful tone of the coming death of Ahab. For the simile cf. Numb. xxvii. 17, a passage which may have been in Micaiah's thoughts.

let them return] The prophet pictures the great disaster as falling specially upon Ahab. When he was slain, there would be no attempt to prevent the escape of his army.

18. *that he would prophesy no good*] R.V. (as in Chronicles) **that he would not prophesy good.** Of course Ahab was desirous of representing to Jehoshaphat that it was out of ill will that Micaiah spake always evil; and he appears to have weakened the effect of the prophet's words in some way, or else, after such a solemn portending of disaster, Jehoshaphat would hardly have joined the expedition. It was perhaps with the consciousness of the effect which was being produced on the mind of the king of Judah, that Micaiah proceeds to unfold a further vision shewing how God was allowing Ahab to be led astray to his destruction.

19. *And he said*] After these words the LXX. adds οὐχ οὕτως οὐκ ἐγώ, 'Not so, I do not.' Here we can discern how the insertion was made. The next word in the Hebrew text is לָכֵן = Therefore. This

therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. And the LORD said, Who 20
shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood 21
before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the 22
LORD said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade *him*, and prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now therefore behold, the 23
LORD hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy

the translators have taken for לֹא כֵן=not so, and have put in the *οὐκ ἐγὼ* to round off the sense. Apparently they must have seen or thought they saw the same reading in verse 17 above, for there they have made a similar insertion.

Hear thou therefore] R.V. **Therefore hear thou.** Conforming to the order of the Hebrew, and the order in 2 Chronicles.

I saw the Lord] A vision in which Micaiah had been shewn the heavenly council-chamber. Jehovah was sitting as ruler of the universe, and all ministers waiting around to speed at His bidding. These are the ministering spirits of Hebrews i. 14. But they also discharge other ministry, as when the angel of the Lord destroyed David's people (2 Sam. xxiv. 16) or the army of Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 35).

20. *Who shall persuade* [R.V. **entice**] *Ahab*] The same change also is made in the two following verses. 'Entice' is the rendering in 2 Chronicles, and it represents much better the sense of the verb in the original, which implies flattery and deception; and this it was which was to lead Ahab to his ruin.

21. *And there came forth a spirit*] The Hebrew has '*the* spirit' as is noted on the margin of the R.V. It seems therefore to imply some definite power which imparted to prophets their gifts; the prophetic spirit. That God allowed this power to delude Ahab was because of the king's persistence in evil. God therefore gives him over to it, and causes the prophets whom he has chosen for himself, to the rejection of Micaiah and such as he, to be the instruments of his destruction. Thus when Isaiah is sent to rebellious Israel (Is. vi. 10) his mission is described as of this nature. God says to him 'Make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts.' In this wise and with like effect comes the spirit from God into the mouths of Ahab's four hundred.

22. *and I will be*] The R.V. omits 'I' here, and later on inserts 'shalt' before 'prevail,' to accord with 2 Chronicles, the English being thus as exactly alike in the two passages as the Hebrew is.

23. *The Lord hath put a lying spirit*] These words bear out what

prophets, and the LORD hath spoken evil concerning thee.
24 But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near, and smote
Micaiah on the cheek, and said, Which way went the spirit
25 of the LORD from me to speak unto thee? And Micaiah
said, Behold, thou shalt see in that day, when thou shalt go
26 into an inner chamber to hide thyself. And the king of

has been said on verse 21. It was a messenger from Jehovah which led these prophets astray. We are not to conclude from this that it was an evil spirit, or Satan, as some have suggested. Such spirits are not God's agents. The spirit which here wrought the evil did but foster the false notions which a long course of previous warnings had had no effect in driving away. Now therefore Ahab is given up to them. God sends him 'a strong delusion, that he should believe a lie' (2 Thess. ii. 11). Cf. Ps. lxxviii. 49. 'He sent messengers of evil (*not*, evil angels) among them'.

24. *But Zedekiah...went* [R.V. **came**] *near*] The verb is the same as in xx. 13. See note there.

Josephus has a great expansion of the narrative at this point, which leads up to the blow given to Micaiah. He says 'the king began to ponder on what had been said, but Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, came near and advised him to pay no regard to Micaiah, for he spake no truth. And he brought forward, as a proof of this, what Elijah, who knew the future far better than this man, had prophesied. He prophesied in the city of Jezreel and said that dogs should lick the king's blood in the field of Naboth, as they had licked that of Naboth who through him had been stoned by the people. It is clear then that this man lies, in contradicting the better prophet and declaring that the king shall die within three days. But ye shall know if he is true and has the power of the divine spirit. For let him, after I have struck him, blast my hand at once, as Jadon (see above on xiii. 1) withered the right hand of king Jeroboam, when he desired to arrest him. For, said he, you have heard what happened then. Whereupon he struck Micaiah, and when no harm befel him, Ahab took heart and was encouraged to lead his army against the Syrian.'

Which way went the spirit of the Lord] The whole account intimates that Zedekiah conceived himself prompted by the divine spirit and thought that he was telling the truth to Ahab. He was moved by the spirit of prophecy but knew not that God had willed it to be to him a spirit of lies.

The LXX. has rendered 'what spirit of the Lord was it that has spoken in thee?'

25. *Behold, thou shalt see in* [R.V. **on**] *that day*] The small change harmonizes this passage with 2 Chron. What Micaiah was to see and be convinced of was, that the spirit of God had passed away from him and gone to Micaiah. The events would bring proof with them.

into an inner chamber] See note on xx. 30 above.

to hide thyself] When the news of the defeat came Samaria would

Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and 27
say, Thus saith the king, Put this *fellow in* the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. And Micaiah said, If thou return 28
at all in peace, the LORD hath not spoken by me. And he said, Hearken, O people, every one of you.

be terrified, and such as expected the invader to come on, after his victory, would seek the securest places of concealment. The story tells us nothing of the events which followed Ahab's death, but a man whose words, boastful now, were so belied in a few days would certainly desire to avoid being seen as much as might be.

26. *carry him back unto Amon*] As Ahab knew so well how to find Micaiah when he was wanted, it may be that he was already under the charge of Amon, in a sort of *libera custodia*. But the command in the next verse to put him into prison seems conclusive that he had not been a prisoner before.

Joash the king's son] We have nothing to guide us in deciding how this man was related to Ahab, or whether he was so at all. His occupation, in conjunction with Amon the governor of the city, as superintendent of the prison-house renders it improbable that he was very closely connected with the reigning family. On the other hand we can hardly think that Joash would have this title if he were of one of the families which had preceded Omri on the throne of Israel. Each new dynasty would probably clear out of the way any who might be likely to lay claim to the throne.

27. *bread of affliction*] Prison fare. The expression is found in Isaiah xxx. 20, of the suffering of Israel in captivity. Hence it indicates the food which would be procurable in a time of siege, or by prisoners in captivity.

28. *Hearken, O people, every one of you*] R.V. **Hear, ye peoples, all of you.** This sentence is omitted by the LXX. as are also the words 'And he said' which precede. In consequence it has been thought that they are no part of the original text, but a marginal note of a later time, which some one put down to shew that the Micaiah here spoken of was the same with Micah the author of the prophecy. For that prophecy (Micah i. 2) opens with this same sentence, and beside this, in 2 Chronicles xviii. 14 the name Micah occurs in the text for Micaiah. No one however thinks that Micah the prophet lived in Ahab's days. The R.V. however very properly translates in both places by the same English. For it may be that Micah at his opening took up the burden with which the Scripture record of Micaiah closes.

The plural rendered 'peoples' is very frequent in the O. Test., and the R. V. has introduced this rendering commonly. It signifies sometimes the various nations of the world at large, but often, as here, the tribes of Israel. Cf. Gen. xlix. 10; Deut. xxxii. 8, &c.

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah
30 went up *to* Ramoth-gilead. And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes. And the king of Israel
31 disguised himself, and went into the battle. But the king of Syria commanded his thirty and two captains that had rule over *his* chariots, saying, Fight neither with small nor
32 great, save only with the king of Israel. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat,

29—40. BATTLE OF RAMOTH-GILEAD. DEFEAT AND DEATH OF AHAB. (2 Chron. xviii. 28—34.)

30. *I will disguise myself, and enter* [R.V. go] *into the battle*] Another tense of the same verb is translated 'went' in this verse, and 'go' is the rendering in 2 Chron. xviii. 29.

There must have been some mark by which the king of Judah could be distinguished from the king of Israel; something answering to modern blazonry or a coat of arms, or else the action of Ahab would have been one designed to put his brother-king into the greatest possible peril. This we can hardly think he would have wished to do, nor would Jehoshaphat alone have gone to the post of greatest danger. Ahab seems to have been alarmed lest after all there should be some truth in Micaiah's words. He will therefore clothe himself like an ordinary soldier and let the king of Judah alone appear in kingly robes, for against him the attack would not be particularly directed.

put thou on thy robes] The LXX. has 'my' (τὸν ἱματισμόν μου). But this would have been to expose Jehoshaphat to all the peril which he himself desired to avoid. Josephus says, Ahab meant to falsify (κατασοφίζεσθαι) the predictions of Micaiah.

31. *But* [R.V. **Now**] *the king of Syria commanded* [R.V. **had commanded**] *his thirty and two captains*] The changes are as usual to conform to 2 Chronicles. These thirty-two captains were most likely those who had been chosen to supply the places of the thirty-two kings that were removed in the campaign of three years before (xx. 24).

that had rule over his chariots] R. V. **of his chariots**. For one word is rendered twice over, first 'captains' and then 'that had rule.' The command was given to these officers because they were in the front of the battle, the cavalry taking lead of the infantry.

Fight neither with small nor great] The meaning of the order is, that they should let no engagement with other persons prevent them, any more than they could help, from singling out Ahab and attacking him. It was the single combat of chiefs, but there were 32, any one of whom might attack him. Josephus however says 'though the battle lasted from day dawn till evening, they slew no one, according to the king's command, seeking only to destroy Ahab, and not being able to find him.'

32. *when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat*] They would recognise from a distance that this was a royal personage, and would naturally suppose that it could be none other than Ahab. On approach-

that they said, Surely it *is* the king of Israel. And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out. And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots 33
perceived that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. And a *certain* man drew a bow 34
at a venture, and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness: wherefore he said unto the driver of

ing nearer they would probably discern that he was not wearing the armour and insignia of Israel. The LXX. represents them as saying 'This *seems to be* the king of Israel,' as if they were guided by the robes and kingly array.

And they turned aside to fight against him] The LXX. has 'and they compassed him about &c.'

and Jehoshaphat cried out] Perhaps to his own men to rally round him for defence. It can hardly have been a cry to his assailants to let them know he was not the man they sought. For he could not be acquainted with the orders they had received. We see from the expansion in 2 Chron. xviii. 31 'But Jehoshaphat cried out and the Lord helped him; and God moved them *to depart* from him' that it was understood at that time that the cry was to Jehovah to save him from the danger. The Vulg. has 'clamavit ad Dominum.'

33. *when the captains...perceived that it* was *not the king of Israel*] From this it is plain that the pursuers gathered, by the cry, knowledge that it was Jehoshaphat. A cry of supplication would have been no guide to them, but a shout of 'Judah to the rescue,' or some similar word, might make them aware that the king they were approaching was the king of Judah.

34. *And a* certain *man*] Josephus has given him a name. 'A certain youth of the royal family of Adad [i.e. Ben-hadad] whose name was Aman.' 'Fate, the inevitable,' he says, 'found Ahab out even without his robes.'

drew a bow [R.V. his bow] *at a venture*] The noun is definite in form in the Hebrew, so that the change is necessary. The word rendered 'at a venture' is translated in other places, and on the margin of A.V. and R.V. 'in his simplicity.' It is also rendered 'in his integrity' (Prov. xix. 1) and 'in his uprightness' (Prov. xxviii. 6). The idea appears to be that the man taking aim at some one, was quite unaware at whom he was shooting. He levelled at some enemy and hit him, not knowing how he had contributed to the victory. 'At a venture' must therefore not be taken to mean 'a shot at random.' The LXX. εὐστόχως 'with good aim' is a conjecture.

between the joints of the harness] The margins of R.V. 'between the lower armour and the breastplate' and of A.V. 'between the joints and the breastplate' help us to understand what is meant. The former word, rendered 'joints,' indicates that part where the breastplate terminated and where the lower armour commenced. A part of the body would there necessarily be less securely protected.

wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot] He would not wish to spread alarm among his soldiers, and so made his retreat without observation.

his chariot, Turn thine hand, and carry me out of the host;
35 for I am wounded. And the battle increased that day:
and the king was stayed up in *his* chariot against the
Syrians, and died at even: and the blood ran out of the
36 wound into the midst of the chariot. And there went a
proclamation throughout the host about the going down of
the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his
37 own country. So the king died, and was brought *to* Samaria;
38 and they buried the king in Samaria. And *one* washed the

I am wounded] R.V. **sore wounded.** The literal rendering 'made sick' which is given on the margin of A.V. implies more than an ordinary wound. The translation 'sore wounded' is from 2 Chron. xxxv. 23 (A.V.). Perhaps Ahab employed the word, which might have a certain vagueness, that the charioteer should not spread an alarm. For the driver knew of course who it was whom he was carrying.

35. *the king was stayed up in his chariot*] Some attempt was doubtless made to stop the bleeding, and it was thought best that though not in the fight, Ahab should not withdraw from the field. The LXX. says 'from morning till evening,' thus giving the impression that the king was wounded at the very beginning of the fight. The Chronicler says 'he stayed himself up...*until the even*.' This would be inferred from our verse. There is nothing to warrant the expression of the LXX.

into the midst [R.V. **bottom**] *of the chariot*] As will be seen from the margin of A.V. the literal meaning is 'bosom.' The knowledge of how to stop the bleeding of a wound was not great in those days, and Ahab's wound must have been fatal whatever had been done. At this point we are left by the Chronicler who closes his notice of these events with the death of Ahab. Israel's history was no subject of concern for him, except where it touched on that of Judah.

36. *And there went a proclamation*] R.V. **a cry.** The word is often rendered 'cry' and applied both to sorrowful and joyous utterances. Cf. Ps. xvii. 1, xxx. 5. Nowhere else is it rendered 'proclamation.' It indicates that word was passed round from troop to troop that some disaster made retreat necessary. The LXX. paraphrases 'And the herald of the host at the setting of the sun stood and said,' &c.

every man to his own country] The R.V. omits 'own', which has nothing to represent it in the original. The LXX. adds to the cry, 'for the king is dead.' But this is merely their version of the first words in verse 37. For they continue, 'And they came to Samaria,' &c.

38. *And* one [R.V. **they**] *washed the chariot in* [R.V. **by**] *the pool of Samaria*] The first change substitutes an English for a Hebrew idiom; the second renders more exactly the preposition of the original. It was necessary in the East to provide large reservoirs outside each town that the supplies of water in the rainy season might be kept for times of drought. Many such pools are mentioned in Scripture, and some, for example those at Bethlehem, remain to the present day. To the side of such a tank the royal equipage was brought to be washed. Thus Ahab's

chariot in the pool of Samaria; and the dogs licked up his blood; and they washed his armour; according unto the word of the LORD which he spake. Now the rest of the 39
acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made, and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? So Ahab slept 40
with his fathers; and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.
And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa *began* to reign over Judah 41

blood came to be licked up by the dogs in the same sort of spot, outside the city walls, as that where Naboth's blood was licked up near Jezreel.

and the dogs licked, &c.] Here as above in xxi. 19 the LXX. adds 'the swine' to the dogs.

and they washed his armour] R.V. **Now the harlots washed themselves there.** This change, which is the rendering of the LXX., is no doubt correct. The Hebrew word זנות occurs often in the O. Test. and means nothing else but 'harlots,' while the verb in the sentence is not one applied to washing articles that need cleaning but to bathing the body. Cf. Exod. xxx. 19, 21, xl. 12, 31; Lev. xvi. 4, 24, 26, 28, and in Numb. xix. 19 another verb is used for 'wash his clothes' and the present verb rendered 'bathe himself,' and in the verse before us another verb is employed to describe the washing of the chariot.

The R.V. by placing this clause in a parenthesis seems to treat it as a subsidiary feature in the description. This was the place to which they usually came to bathe. Some have however suggested that the women alluded to were those attached (as such persons were) to the temples of Baal and Ashtoreth, and that thus a greater indignity still was offered to this fosterer of idolatrous worship. This interpretation however reads a good deal into the text which is not there. And surely it was indignity enough for the royal blood to be washed into the waters of the harlots' bath. It should be mentioned that Josephus, and, among the Fathers, Theodoret, support the rendering of R.V. The A.V. is derived from the Chaldee and the Syriac versions.

39. *the ivory house that he made* [R.V. **built**] The verb is the same as in the next clause. The house was of course not of ivory, but largely adorned with it. That such adornment prevailed in Oriental lands, see Amos iii. 15. The family of Ahab were great builders. It was the father of this king who in his short reign built Samaria, and Ahab apparently built several cities, i.e. perhaps restored and beautified them. Omri's building of Samaria, however, was the founding of a new capital.

40. *Ahaziah his son*] Ahaziah was the elder son of Ahab, and died subsequently in consequence of a fall (2 Kings i. 17) and was succeeded by his brother Jehoram (2 Kings iii. 1).

41—50. BRIEF NOTICE OF THE REIGN OF JEHOSHAPHAT, KING OF JUDAH. (2 Chron. xx. 31—37, xxi. 1.)

41. *Jehoshaphat the son of Asa*] For the events of the twenty-five years of Jehoshaphat's reign the books of Kings give but a scanty

42 in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. Jehoshaphat *was*
thirty and five years old when he *began* to reign; and he
reigned twenty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
43 name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. And he walked
in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from
it, doing *that* which *was* right in the eyes of the LORD: never-
theless the high places were not taken away; *for* the people

record. His alliance with Jehoram, Ahab's son, against the king of Moab, is mentioned (2 Kings ii. 7, seqq.) and that Jehoram, his son, was made king during his father's lifetime (2 Kings viii. 16). But this is all. Yet clearly Jehoshaphat was a king of much influence. The Chronicler also tells much good concerning him. The Lord was with him (2 Chron. xvii.) and he prospered. He sent out Levites with the princes to teach the people in the cities of Judah. His enemies were dismayed by his greatness, for he had famous commanders and mighty armies. He made the improper alliance with Ahab (2 Chron. xviii.) but after Ahab's death, he returned to Jerusalem and appointed and instructed judges and priests and Levites (2 Chron. xix.) to act in the fear of the Lord and with a perfect heart. He was attacked by Moab (2 Chron. xx.) but seeking unto the Lord he gained a great victory, which he celebrated in such way that the place of the celebration was known afterwards as 'The valley of blessing.'

42. *He reigned twenty and five years*] His son and successor, Jehoram, was made king in conjunction with his father, before Jehoshaphat's death (2 Kings ix. 16). But this could only have been done just at the close of Jehoshaphat's reign. For it was in the fourth year of Ahab that Jehoshaphat began to reign. Ahab reigned 22 years (1 Kings xvi. 29). So that 18 years of Jehoshaphat's reign were over when Ahab died. Ahaziah reigned two years (see verse 51 below) and it was in the 5th year of Joram, the brother and successor of Ahaziah, that Jehoshaphat joined his son with him in the kingdom. So that, unless the years are not complete years, it must have been in the closing years of his father's reign that Jehoram began his joint reign.

his mother's name] On the important position occupied by the queen-mother in Oriental kingdoms, see on ii. 19. This accounts for the constant mention of her name at each king's accession.

43. *nevertheless* [R.V. **howbeit**] *the high places were not taken away*] for [om. *for* R.V.] *the people offered* [R.V. **still sacrificed**] *and burnt incense yet* [om. *yet* R.V.] *in the high places*. The changes get rid of the italic *for*, and put *still* instead of *yet* in its proper place in the verse. 'To sacrifice' is the constant translation of the verb changed in R.V.

The statement here made is no contradiction, as might at first sight appear, to 2 Chron. xvii. 6, 'he took away the high places and groves [R.V. **the Ashêrim**] out of Judah.' The addition of 'the Ashêrim' in the latter passage shews that the writer is speaking of the high places which were devoted to the worship of Baal and Astoreth. This worship had spread from Israel into Judah, and it was this which

offered and burnt incense yet in the high places. And 45
Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. Now the
rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and his might that he shewed,
and how he warred, *are* they not written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Judah? And the remnant of the 46
sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he
took out of the land. *There was* then no king in Edom: a 47
deputy *was* king. Jehoshaphat made ships of Tharshish to 48

Jehoshaphat swept away, an act which Jehu the prophet specially commends (2 Chron. xix. 3). But the high places which had been from early times set apart for the worship of Jehovah, and which were meant to be put down when the Temple was built, he had not power to abolish. From long custom people clung to them, and having at first been places of acceptable worship, there was great difficulty in proceeding to extremities against those who still chose to worship there.

44. *Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel*] This is mentioned because up to his time the two kingdoms had been always at war.

45. *and how he warred*] The words are not represented in the LXX. On the wars of Jehoshaphat, see above on verse 41, and the chapters in 2 Chronicles there referred to.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah] The Chronicler gives, as the authority for Jehoshaphat's history, the book of Jehu, the son of Hanani, who is mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

46. *And the remnant*, &c.] This passage, down to the end of verse 49, is omitted by the (*Vat.*) LXX.

which remained in the days of his father] Asa had striven to put them down. See xv. 12 above.

he took [R.V. **put away**] *out of the land*] 'To put away' is by far the most frequent rendering of the verb. See concerning a similar proceeding 2 Kings xxiii. 24.

47. There was *then* [R.V. **And there was**] *no king in Edom*] Therefore Jehoshaphat could go through Idumæa to the Red Sea and prepare him a fleet in Ezion-geber. On Ezion-geber and its position in the land of Edom, see above on ix. 26.

a deputy was *king*] What had become of the royal family of Edom, which Hadad (see xi. 14 seqq.) appears to have established again, we are nowhere told. Nor is there anything to guide us to a conclusion by whom the deputy was appointed. It may be that Hadad had never gained much power after his return from Egypt, and his successor had not been able to maintain his position. In that case the king of Judah might have claimed the rights which his predecessor had once held, and have set up a governor in Edom. If this were so a passage for the servants of the king of Judah through the land would be a matter of course.

48. *ships of Tharshish*] See above on x. 22.

Ophir] See ix. 28. The Chronicler says the ships were to go to Tarshish (2 Chron. xx. 38).

go to Ophir for gold: but they went not; for the ships were
49 broken at Ezion-geber. Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab
unto Jehoshaphat, Let my servants go with thy servants in the
50 ships. But Jehoshaphat would not. And Jehoshaphat slept
with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of
David his father: and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead.
51 Ahaziah the son of Ahab *began* to reign over Israel in
Samaria the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah,
52 and reigned two years over Israel. And he did evil in the
sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and
in the way of his mother, and in the way of Jeroboam the
53 son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin: for he served Baal,
and worshipped him, and provoked to anger the LORD God
of Israel, according unto all that his father had done.

the ships were broken] According to the Chronicler (2 Chron. xx. 35—37) these ships were built in conjunction with Ahaziah, king of Israel. And Eliezer the prophet rebuked Jehoshaphat for this alliance, and said, 'because thou hast joined thyself with Ahaziah, the Lord hath broken thy works.' Thus the breaking of the ships, however it came to pass, by storm or otherwise, was regarded as brought about by divine interposition.

49. *Let my servants go with thy servants*] This appears to have been an attempt to engage Jehoshaphat in a second expedition. If there were two expeditions contemplated, one may have been to Ophir, and the other to Tarshish. This would account for what is noticed in the previous verse, that the Chronicler mentions Tarshish as the destination, while here Ophir is spoken of.

51—53. AHAZIAH, KING OF ISRAEL. HIS WICKED REIGN. (Not in Chronicles.)

51. *the seventeenth year*] The R.V. inserts **in** before these words, and as the preposition is in the original, there is no ground for excluding it in the English. On the chronology see above on verse 42.

and reigned] R.V. **and he reigned.** The main division of the verse in the Hebrew precedes these words, and the pronoun repeated makes somewhat of a like division in the translation.

52. *did evil* [R.V. **did that which was evil**] As often before.

the way of his mother] i.e. He tried to put down the worship of Jehovah altogether, as Jezebel had done.

who [R.V. **wherein he**] *made Israel to sin*] On a similar change, cf. above xvi. 30.

53. *for* [R.V. **And**] *he served Baal*] This is an additional count in his wickedness, not an explanation of what is contained in the verse before. Hence the change. The LXX., instead of 'according to all that his father had done,' gives 'according to all things which had been before him.' As though there were no evil done by any previous king (and all of them had been wicked) which Ahaziah did not imitate.

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THE SECOND BOOK

OF THE

KINGS.

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THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED,

THE FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THEN Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of 1
Ahab. And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his 2

CH. I. 1—18. SICKNESS OF AHAZIAH, KING OF ISRAEL. HIS MESSENGERS SENT TO ENQUIRE OF BAALZEBUB ARE DESTROYED BY ELIJAH. AHAZIAH DYING IS SUCCEEDED BY HIS BROTHER JEHORAM. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Then* [R.V. **And**] *Moab rebelled against Israel*] The conjunction is the simple copulative. The less severance that is made between the portion of Ahaziah's history in 1 Kings and that which is given in this chapter the better. The so-called two books of Kings are but one, and the division has been made quite arbitrarily and in the middle of a reign.

We have no record in Scripture how Moab came to be subject to Israel; but the inscription on the Moabite stone shews us that Israel and Moab were in conflict in the days of Omri, Ahab's father. Of their previous subjugation by David we read 2 Sam. viii. 2, after which we have no mention of them till this passage. It is by no means improbable that on the secession of the ten tribes, the Moabites became subjects of Israel, as the tribes on the east of Jordan all appertained to the northern kingdom. The death of Ahab, and the national prostration of the Israelites after their defeat at Ramoth Gilead would be counted a good opportunity for the Moabites to strike a blow for their freedom. The heavy burden laid upon them is seen from 2 Kings iii. 4 where their tribute is specified as 'an hundred thousand lambs and an hundred thousand rams with their wool'. Cf. also Is. xvi. 1. We know from the history of the settlement of the Israelites (Numb. xxxii. 1—4) how well suited for cattle rearing were some parts of the Transjordanic country. From the nature of the Moabite tribute it is very likely that their whole wealth was in their flocks and herds.

after the death of Ahab] Ahab's death was quite unexpected, and perhaps no long time elapsed between that event and Ahaziah's fall. Affairs were sure to be out of joint, and would invite subjects who felt their yoke heavy to try and cast it off.

2. *And Ahaziah fell down through a* [R.V. **the**] *lattice*] From the

upper chamber that *was* in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this
3 disease. But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king

use of the word rendered 'lattice' elsewhere (cf. Job xviii. 8), it must mean some kind of net or trellis-work put in front of an open space, a window or a balcony. As it is said the king fell *through* it, we may most probably conclude that an Oriental window space with its trellis-work is intended. The description of it as 'in his upper chamber' shews that it cannot have been a palisade round the flat roof of the house, as some have thought, which broke away as he was leaning on it, and let him fall down. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 2. 1) represents the king as having fallen as he was coming down from the housetop.

and was sick] The verb is employed, as here, of sickness caused by wounds, and also of ordinary disease (cf. 2 Kings xiii. 14) as in the case of Elisha. It is also used metaphorically (cf. Song ii. 5; v. 8).

inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron] The son of Jezebel follows his mother's example in his adherence to false gods. It was probably because Ekron was the nearest shrine of such a divinity that Ahaziah was sending thither. Ekron was the most northern of the five great Philistine cities, and so most easily within reach from Samaria. It is not possible to say, from the form of the two Hebrew words which make up the name Baal-zebub, whether they are in construction or in apposition. The latter word signifies 'a fly', and the LXX. taking them as in apposition rendered 'Baal, the fly', as though the image of the god had been in that form, just as Dagon's image, in the neighbouring Ashdod, was in part at least like a fish. But it seems more natural to regard the words as in construction, so that 'the Baal (or lord) of flies' would be an epithet implying that the god was supposed to be an averter of flies, these insects being, especially in hot countries, a very serious pest. Such among the Greeks was Ζεὺς ἀπόμυιος (Paus. v. 14. 2), and among the Romans a deity supposed to possess this fly-dispelling power was named 'Myiagrus' and 'Myiodes' =the fly catcher. (Plin. x. 28. 40; xxix. 6. 34.)

whether I shall recover of this disease] R. V. sickness. The noun is from the same root as the verb rendered 'was sick', just before. There must have been some oracle at Ekron, for it was an answer that Ahaziah sought. He did not send his messengers to make supplication for his recovery. The LXX. adds at the close of this verse 'and they went to inquire concerning him'.

3. *Elijah the Tishbite*] See on 1 Kings xvii. 1. For a similar message to the prophet cf. 1 Kings xxi. 17. We know from 2 Kings iv. 25 that Elisha was often to be found on Mt Carmel where there was most likely a school of the prophets (see 2 Kings ii. 25). It may be that Elijah also made his most settled dwelling there. At this time he went and took up a position on some height (see below, verse 9)

of Samaria, and say unto them, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith the LORD, Thou shalt 4
not come down from *that* bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And Elijah departed. And when the 5
messengers turned back unto him, he said unto them, Why are ye now turned back? And they said unto him, There 6

which commanded the road by which the messengers were journeying from Samaria to Ekron.

the king of Samaria] When the city of Samaria had been built and made the royal residence, the name 'Samaria' soon came to be used as the equivalent of 'Israel' for the kingdom of the ten tribes. See before 1 Kings xxi. 1.

Is it *not because* there is *not a God in Israel*] R.V. **Is it because there is no God in Israel.** The Hebrew could employ a double negative, as the Greek sometimes does, but the sense intended is given in English by the single one. This rendering the A. V. employs in Exod. xiv. 11 where the original is in the same form as in the verse before us: 'Because there were no graves in Egypt'; and for a similar double negative in the Hebrew of Eccles. iii. 11 the A.V. gives 'so that no man can find out'. The same form of phrase is repeated below in verses 6 and 16.

The LXX. takes away the first word of the Hebrew in the next sentence, וְלָכֵן = *Now therefore*, from its connexion and renders it as a separate phrase, and as if it had been וְלֹא כֵן = καὶ οὐχ οὕτως, putting ὅτι, which has nothing to represent it in the Hebrew, as the connecting particle of the next clause. The same misreading occurs in verses 6 and 16.

4 *And Elijah departed*] i. e. to fulfil the command which had been given him by the angel. The LXX. adds 'and spake unto them'. The compiler of the Kings leaves out here any mention of the first meeting of the messengers by the prophet, because it may be assumed that what the prophet was bidden to do, he did.

5. *And when the messengers turned back unto him, he said*] More literally with R.V., **And the messengers returned unto him and he said.** The pronoun refers to the sick king in Samaria. They could only have gone a little way on their journey, and their early reappearance caused him some surprise.

'The errand is soon done. The messengers are returned ere they go. Not a little were they amazed to hear their secret message from another's mouth, neither could they choose but think: He that can tell what Ahaziah said, what he thought, can foretell how he shall speed. We have met with a greater god than we went to seek. What need we inquire for another answer?' (Bp Hall's *Contemplations*).

Why are ye now turned back?] To accord with the previous clause, render with R.V., **Why is it that ye are returned?**

came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, Go, turn again unto the king that sent you, and say unto him, Thus saith the LORD, *Is it* not because *there is* not a God in Israel, *that* thou sendest to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron? therefore thou shalt not come down from *that* bed on which
7 thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. And he said unto them, What manner of man *was he* which came up to meet
8 you, and told you these words? And they answered him, *He was* a hairy man, and girt *with* a girdle of leather about
9 his loins. And he said, It *is* Elijah the Tishbite. Then the king sent unto him a captain of fifty with his fifty. And

6. *There came a man up to meet*] The R.V. puts 'up' before 'a man', because the Hebrew verb signifies 'to come up'. So in A.V. in the next verse. It would appear as though the prophet had met the messengers very early in their journey while they were going down from the hill on which Samaria was built. They did not know Elijah, for he, like John the Baptist afterwards, was not one of those who were to be found in kings' houses. And the messengers were most likely some of the persons in close attendance on the king.

Go, turn again &c.] These words are not in verse 3, but they are natural as a preface to the message there given.

that *thou sendest*] Elijah speaking to the messengers (*v.* 3) would naturally say 'that ye go', but they put the words into a form suitable to their position as servants obeying an order. Yet we can see from some parts of the narrative which follows that some of the king's servants were willing enough to follow where he led them.

7. *What manner of man* was he?] The Hebrew noun which is usually rendered 'judgement' is applied sometimes to external appearances of things. Thus Exod. xxvi. 30, 'Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the *fashion* thereof which was shewed thee'. From the answer of the messengers it is clear that the dress and external peculiarities are what is here meant. From them Ahaziah was able to *judge* who the man must be.

8. He was *a hairy man*] Literally, 'lord, i.e. possessor, of hair'. This might equally be used of the long hair of the head and beard, or of the shaggy cloak of hair worn as a garment. But when we know of him who came 'in the spirit and power of Elijah' that 'his *raiment* was of camel's hair and a leathern girdle about his loins', it seems better to accept the expression as a description of Elijah's dress. We know too that the prophets (Zech. xiii. 4) did wear a mantle of hair, probably adopted from the garb of this greatest among them, Elijah.

It is *Elijah the Tishbite*] Though the messengers might not know the prophet, the king, from his father's experience, must have heard a great deal about Elijah, and of his appearance and dress.

9. *Then the king sent unto him*] Clearly Ahaziah's design was to

he went up to him: and behold, he sat on the top of a hill. And he spake unto him, Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down. And Elijah answered and said to the 10
captain of fifty, If I *be* a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty. And there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty. Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty 11
with his fifty. And he answered and said unto him, O man

arrest and punish Elijah, but considering that the prophet had appeared alone, the number of men sent out against him seems excessive. It may be, however, that in the brevity of the narrative we are not told of Elijah's movements, and that he had already retired to some centre of the prophetic body; and if so, the king may have apprehended that resistance would be offered to his arrest.

a captain of fifty] One of the subdivisions of the Jewish army was into 'fifties'. See 1 Sam. viii. 12. Greater bodies were 'hundreds' and 'thousands' (Num. xxxi. 14).

he sat on the top of a [R.V. **the**] *hill*] The word rendered 'sat' may also be translated 'dwelt' (see marg. of R.V.) and the definite article indicates that some particular hill is intended, therefore the suggestion that Elijah had already withdrawn to Carmel, and that the soldiers followed him thither, is most likely correct.

Thou [R.V. **O**] *man of God*] The original is precisely as in verse 13. But in the two first addresses the title was given no doubt in mockery. In the mouth of one who really felt the force of the words there could have followed them no such sentence as 'the king hath said, Come down'. For a contrast see 1 Kings xvii. 18, 24.

10. *If I* be *a man of God*] The spirit of the Law differs from that of the Gospel, and our Lord forbad (Luke ix. 55) his disciples the wish to imitate Elijah. But in the light which he had, Elijah felt that the majesty of Jehovah was outraged, when the name 'man of God', which should have signified reverence, was used as a term of scorn. And in the spirit of the Law he calls on God to make manifest that His servants and His message may not lightly be despised. And God in His discipline of the world granted the prophet's prayer. Bp Hall says 'There are few tracks of Elijah that are ordinary and fit for common feet. His actions are more for wonder than for precedent. Not in his own defence would the prophet have been the death of so many, if God had not, by a peculiar instinct, made him an instrument of this just vengeance'.

11. *Again also* [R.V. **And again**] *he sent*] Ahaziah has no regard for the lives that have been sacrificed. Josephus pictures him as 'exceedingly angry when the destruction of these fifty was made known to him' (*Ant.* IX. 2. 1). Probably also his fierceness was aggravated by his hopeless sickness.

And he answered] The verbs which signify 'to answer' are used both

12 of God, thus hath the king said, Come down quickly. And
Elijah answered and said unto them, If I *be* a man of God,
let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy
fifty. And the fire of God came down from heaven, and
13 consumed him and his fifty. And he sent again a captain
of the third fifty with his fifty. And the third captain of
fifty went up, and came and fell on his knees before Elijah,
and besought him, and said unto him, O man of God, I
pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants,
14 be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down
from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former
fifties with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious
15 in thy sight. And the angel of the LORD said unto Elijah,
Go down with him: be not afraid of him. And he arose,

in Hebrew and in Greek for remarks made where, as here, no question has been asked.

Come down quickly] The second captain goes in the spirit of the king and adds to the message of the first the demand of speedy obedience. We may therefore consider that his punishment was more deserved than that of the former. But the narrative makes it quite clear that both by the king and his people Jehovah was forgotten, and that some signal mark of His anger was called for to check the wandering after other gods, which had grown up out of Jeroboam's sin.

13. *a captain of the* [R.V. a] *third fifty*] The LXX. omits the number 'third', and the grammar in the Hebrew is not quite regular.

came and fell on his knees] He utters no command, but as a suppliant recognises the power of which Elijah was the representative. Josephus makes him admit that he has only come because the king commanded it.

be precious in thy sight] A common phrase about a life that is spared. Cf. 1 Sam. xxvi. 21; Ps. lxxii. 14.

14. *Behold, there came fire down from heaven*] Here is another point in which the brevity of the narrative leaves much for conjecture. How was the news of the first and second destruction brought, and its nature described? The sending out of an armed band would no doubt attract attention, and persons who were near at hand when the meeting with the prophet took place may have brought the news. Was the second captain sent on his errand without any knowledge of what had happened to his predecessor?

15. *be not afraid of him*] Some have taken the pronoun here to refer to the captain. This can hardly be correct. The third messenger was all humility and entreaty, and the only person to be feared was the king Ahaziah, irate because of the destruction of his soldiers and the defiance of his authority.

and went down with him unto the king. And he said unto 16
him, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast sent
messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron, *is it*
not because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of his word?
therefore thou shalt not come down off *that* bed on which
thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. So he died accord- 17
ing to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken.
And Jehoram reigned in his stead in the second year of
Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah; because he

17. *So he died*] The whole narrative bears marks of extreme simplicity. Nothing but the barest facts are given, and no attempt made to explain or account for any part of the history. The touches which Josephus adds to the story mark the difference between the early and the later record. He describes the hasty return of the messengers and the king's astonishment thereat. They relate how the prophet had hindered their further journey. The first captain threatens force to the prophet if he refuse to obey the king's order, and the second is equally imperative. The third captain is described as prudent and exceeding gentle in disposition, and as speaking friendly to Elijah, and explaining that he himself, as well as the other two bands had only come because they were forced to do so, and that this, of course, the prophet knew. The language and demeanour were acceptable to Elijah and so he followed the captain to Samaria.

which Elijah had spoken] We are told nothing of what must have been a most solemn interview, nor how it came to pass that the prophet was allowed to go without any punishment. Elijah disappears, as is usual in the history, without a word to tell us of his whereabouts.

And Jehoram reigned in his stead] This was the brother of Ahaziah. The LXX. omits in this verse 'And Jehoram...no son.' But instead of it after verse 18 there is a long addition, substantially like iii. 1—3 below, but the LXX. has the same words in that place also.

in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah] It is extremely difficult to make this statement fit with the rest of the chronological details of the books of Kings. The accession of Jehoram of Israel is here fixed in the second year of Jehoram of Judah, but in 2 Kings iii. 1 the same event is assigned to the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. Now Jehoshaphat reigned 25 years (1 Kings xxii. 42). If therefore the two statements are correct Jehoram of Judah must, in some form or other, have been counted as king along with his father from about the 17th year of Jehoshaphat's reign. But according to 2 Kings viii. 16, it was in the 5th year of Jehoram of Israel that Jehoram of Judah began his reign. This of course must refer to his independent reign. But Jehoshaphat's reign of 25 years causes some difficulty, unless we suppose, as the Jews are said to have reckoned, that 25 years might really be only 23 and small portions of 2 other years. Then Jehoram of Israel, who began to reign in the

18 had no son. Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

2 And it came to pass, when the LORD would take up Elijah *into* heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with

18th year of Jehoshaphat, might have reigned little more than 5 years when Jehoshaphat died, and when Jehoram of Judah began the 8 years of his independent reign, he having reigned about the same period along with his father Jehoshaphat. This is the generally accepted settlement of the dates, but the chronology of the two kingdoms is far from being clearly marked. Nor is there satisfactory evidence that a son was ever king along with his father.

CH. II. 1—18. ELIJAH IS CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN. THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH RESTS ON ELISHA. HIS FIRST PROPHETIC APPEARANCE. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *when the Lord would take up Elijah*] The whole of the following narrative about Elijah's assumption must be drawn from what was communicated by Elisha. It was probably collected by some among the sons of the prophets, and added to the previous record of Elijah's life. The insertion of the history here would appear, from 2 Chron. xxi. 12—15, to be a departure from the strict order of events. Jehoshaphat king of Judah is still alive, and in the next chapter we shall find an account of his expedition, in conjunction with Jehoram of Israel against the Moabites. In the passage just cited, however, the Chronicler tells of a letter which Elijah sent to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, at a time, as it appears, after his father's death. Jehoram had risen up to the kingdom of his father and had slain all his brethren with the sword, and was walking in the ways of the northern kings of the house of Ahab. The letter was to warn him of the punishment which awaited his evil deeds. We can hardly place such acts as are there described during the period in which Jehoram was as it seems associated with Jehoshaphat in the kingdom. The father must have been dead ere one brother could slay all the rest of the family. The margin of the A. V. in 2 Chron. xxi. 12 describes Elijah's letter as 'writ before his death', apparently with the meaning that it was prepared by prophetic foreknowledge and sent by some one else when the time came that its warning was needed. It seems much more likely that the compiler of Kings decided to make his history of Elijah complete before he went on to other matters, and has by so doing put the final scene of the prophet's earthly life a little earlier than its proper place in the history.

into *heaven by a whirlwind*] The R. V., to preserve the same order of words as the original, has 'by a whirlwind into heaven'. The writer uses the figure which most nearly describes such a manifestation as that by which Elijah was translated. Human speech must of course fail to convey a true picture of so sublime a scene.

Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal] No mention of Elisha as Elijah's companion is given in the history between the day of Elisha's

Elisha from Gilgal. And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry 2
here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me to Beth-el.
And Elisha said *unto him*, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy
soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they went down *to*

call and the time of the events in this chapter. But in 1 Kings xix. 21 we read that Elisha 'ministered unto' Elijah, and in 2 Kings iii. 11 he is called 'Elisha the son of Shaphat which poured water on the hands of Elijah': i.e. who performed for the aged prophet such services as a young attendant could yield to his master. We may therefore conclude that Elisha's time had been mainly spent in Elijah's company. The 'Gilgal' spoken of here must be a different place from that so named in Josh. iv. 19; v. 9, 10. That was situate in the Jordan valley and not very far from Jericho. But here the travellers are described (verse 2) as 'going *down*' from Gilgal to Bethel. There is however another place of the same name in the hill country of Ephraim, which is also the place alluded to in Deut. xi. 30 and is now known as *Jiljilia*, and by making this the starting-point of Elijah's last journey, the description in the text becomes quite accurate, for that place stands considerably higher than Bethel. It is known from 2 Kings iv. 38 that at Gilgal there was a colony of the prophets. At the time when he was to be translated Elijah was probably dwelling among the prophetic body, and passed to the other two centres, Bethel and Jericho, that to them he might leave the precious memory of a visit on the last day when he was seen on earth. 'For a meet farewell to the earth, Elijah will go visit the schools of the prophets, before his departure. These were in his way: of any part of earth, they were nearest unto heaven' (Bp Hall).

2. *Tarry here*] Not only was Elijah himself conscious of some great event at hand but Elisha and the bands of prophets in Bethel and Jericho had an intimation that the departure of Elijah was very near. But the subject is too solemn for words. The two chief persons do not speak of it, and it is only when the separation is just about to take place that direct allusion is made to it (verse 9). We can see however in Elijah's request, here and afterwards, that Elisha should stay behind how awful the immediate future appeared to him, and in Elisha's persistence the great love which the disciple felt for his master. Elijah, feeling that soon he was to stand before God, and was drawing near to the gate of heaven, would save his disciple from the sight of a glory on which man, as the Jew felt, cannot gaze and live, while Elisha is resolved that nothing but the last necessity shall take him from his master's side.

the Lord hath sent me to [R. V. more precisely, **as far as**] *Beth-el*] The whole journey has been marked out for him, and devised that those who were to carry on the work after Elijah's departure might at this last interview see, and remember hereafter, the last looks, fixed on heaven, and the last words, though they seem to have been but few, spoken, of him who had been their guide and father for a long while and amid constant perils.

As *the Lord liveth, and* as *thy soul liveth*] The combination of the

3 Beth-el. And the sons of the prophets that *were at* Beth-el came forth to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? 4 And he said, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And

two phrases imparts much solemnity to the resolve. They are not unfrequently found apart. Thus 'As the Lord liveth' occurs alone in Judges viii. 19; Ruth iii. 13; 1 Sam. xiv. 39 &c., and 'As thy soul liveth' in 1 Sam. i. 26; xvii. 55; 2 Sam. xiv. 19 &c. Beside the places in this chapter the double form is found in 1 Sam. xx. 3; xxv. 26 and is expressive of the most intense earnestness. Elisha's master may be withdrawn from him: he will not be withdrawn from his master.

3. *the sons of the prophets*] They were called 'sons' in the same way as Elisha calls Elijah 'father'. See below verse 12. Whether the prophetic body in Gilgal had been warned before Elijah's departure from them that they would see him no more we are not told; but it seems highly probable that it was so from what is said of Bethel and of Jericho. Thus Elisha started on his journey prepared for what its end would be.

Beth-el] This was the city which in old time had been called Luz (Josh. xviii. 13) though from one passage (Josh. xvi. 2) there seems to have been a distinction between Bethel and Luz, as though the latter had been the old town, and the former a sacred spot near to it. It lay in the northern part of the tribe of Benjamin, and when the kingdoms were divided and Jeroboam set up the calf-worship in Israel, Bethel was constituted the southern sanctuary. Perhaps it was as a protest against this worship that the sons of the prophets made one of their centres in Bethel. It was at Bethel that the voice of God's prophet was first raised against Jeroboam's altar (1 Kings xiii. 1).

came forth to Elisha] The solemn event of which they had been forewarned checks them from addressing Elijah. His thoughts must have been all absorbed in meditation on the revelation which he was so soon to experience, and heaven, not earth, nor the things of earth, was in his mind. Silence when God is so near is the only homage man can pay.

the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to day] We can see from this language that the communion between Elijah and Elisha had been much closer than that which the aged prophet had held with the other sons of the prophets. Hence he is rather spoken of as Elisha's master, than theirs. This is what we should expect from the special way in which Elisha was appointed (1 Kings xix. 16). The prophetic bodies were therefore prepared to accept Elisha as their head, when Elijah had been taken away.

hold you your peace] Elisha had marked the solemn and meditative frame of his master's mind, and would not have it disturbed by any prolonged conversation between himself and the sons of the prophets. He cannot bear the questioning. He thinks of his own weakness and of the terrible burden which will be laid upon him when he is left alone without the friend on whom he has hitherto leaned.

Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee; for the LORD hath sent me *to* Jericho. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came *to* Jericho. And the sons of the prophets 5
that *were* at Jericho came to Elisha, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the LORD will take away thy master from thy head to day? And he answered, Yea, I know *it;* hold you your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I 6
pray thee, here; for the LORD hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, *As* the LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of 7
the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off:

4. *hath sent me* to *Jericho*] The famous city which played a part in the history of Israel from their first entry into Canaan. It had been rebuilt in Ahab's reign (1 Kings xvi. 34) in spite of the divine curse pronounced in Joshua's time on any who should restore it (Josh. vi. 26). And now it had been chosen as the seat of one of the prophetic colleges.

6. *to Jordan*] The journey tends across the river to that part of the country whither Elijah had at first fled for fear of Ahab. In that same land of Gilead, which was Elijah's birthplace (1 Kings xvii. 1) and whither we find the prophet's first flight directed (1 Kings xvii. 2, 3), is to be the scene of his assumption into heaven.

they two went on] It was felt by the whole prophetic band that none but the faithful minister could presume to go as Elijah's companion at such a moment. They watched the departing master and servant, standing only afar off, if perchance they might be allowed to witness something more of the approaching separation.

7. *And fifty men*] It is not without surprise that we come at one single centre upon so large a body of men devoting themselves to a holy life in the service of Jehovah, while Ahab's children are still on the throne of Israel. There seems also to have been, beside Jericho and Bethel, similar colleges at Gilgal and perhaps on Carmel. It would almost appear as though all those who were true adherents of the Lord had betaken themselves to this life of retirement, that they might escape from the evils which followed so thick in the train of the worship of the Baalim.

stood to view] R. V. **over against them**, and similarly in verse 15. This rendering stands also as one margin of the A. V. The Hebrew word [*neged*] originally signifies 'in front' of anything; but since we are *in front* of anything which faces us, and it may be said to be in front of us, the adverb in the text has a double use. Here it refers to the position of the sons of the prophets as they stood looking towards the departing couple, while in the next chapter (iii. 22) it is applied to the blood which the Moabites supposed they saw 'on the other side' of the valley. R. V. has 'over against them' in that verse also.

8 and they two stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle,
and wrapt *it* together, and smote the waters, and they were
divided hither and thither, so that they two went over on
9 dry *ground*. And it came to pass, when they were gone
over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for
thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said,
I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.
10 And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing: *nevertheless*, if

8. *And Elijah took his mantle*] In i. 8 the mantle was not mentioned, but the word here is the same as in Zech. xiii. 4, so that there can be little doubt that the expression 'hairy man' above refers to the garment, and not to the head and beard.

and wrapt it *together*] Making thus a sort of roll or rod, and reminding us by his action of Moses, who smote with his rod the waters of the Nile (Exod. vii. 17, 20) when they were to be turned into blood.

9. *when they were gone over*] Or, with margin of R. V., 'as they went over'. There was now no other place to visit, and the end was felt to be close at hand. Both probably thought how near they were coming to the spot where the earlier prophet Moses had been taken from the earth. In crossing the Jordan Elijah stood again on the slopes of his native Gilead. Was he impelled by that strong desire which so often makes men wish to die among the scenes of their childhood?

before I be taken away from thee] R. V. omits 'away', rather inconsistently, for 'take away' is kept as the rendering of the same verb in verses 3 and 5.

The subject which had been filling both their hearts, the approaching separation, is at last mentioned. The master would help in whatever way he could the disciple who has been chosen to fill his place; and the question tests the character of Elisha. It shews that he felt that he must act with the same undaunted courage and boldness, and that he knew the needs of the times.

let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me] The request is not, as some have thought, for twice the spirit of the departing master. And the attempts which have been made to shew that in some ways Elisha went beyond Elijah are utterly pointless. What Elisha wants is what a father may rightly give to a firstborn son. In Deut. xxi. 17 it is prescribed that to the firstborn shall be given a double portion of all which the father possesses, so that he may have twice as much as each of the other sons. But we are not to think here of the whole of the schools of the prophets as sharing in the gift which Elijah was to bestow. Such slavery to the letter is absurd. What Elisha longs for is such a blessing as will shew that he is esteemed as the dearest member of that band whom Elijah had most trusted.

10. *Thou hast asked a hard thing*] Because it was not Elijah's to bestow. He knew that except for God's strengthening power and comforting revelations his own heart would often have fainted. He therefore leaves the result to depend on God's judgement. If He permit

thou see me *when I am* taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be *so*. And it came to pass, *as* 11
they still went on, and talked, that behold, *there appeared* a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind *into* heaven. And Elisha saw *it*, and he cried, My father, my father, the 12
chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and

Elisha to behold the assumption, then it shall be for a token that the petition is granted, and Elisha counted worthy to be blessed as he desires.

11. as *they still went on, and talked*] Elisha is to remain to the last. And now that the silence has been broken, and the request made, we can understand how much Elijah would find of exhortation and encouragement to bestow as parting counsels on his successor.

a chariot of fire, and horses of fire] Compare with this description the notice of the sight which Elisha's servant (2 Kings vi. 17) was permitted to behold, when he was terrified by the king of Syria's hosts. 'The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.' There it was in answer to Elisha's prayer, 'Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see', that the encouraging enlightenment was vouchsafed. And here we may well think that it was of God's grace and as an assurance that Elisha should receive his petition, that his eyes were opened to behold the glory which carried away his master. Henceforth he was sure that that power was constantly near God's servants, and could say with firm assurance, 'They that be with us are more than they which be with them'. The vision was a source of strength and encouragement in the labours which were before him with no master at his head. He learnt the source of his master's spirit.

12. *My father, my father*] That this title of affection was given by the younger prophets to an elder seems clear from 1 Sam. x. 12, where the question 'Who is their father?' appears to refer to Samuel, and the whole passage to shew that men need not be surprised at Saul being among the prophets, if they only know that he is coming from close communication with Samuel. The use of the title 'father' suits perfectly with the request that has just been made for the share which falls to the firstborn.

the chariot [R.V. chariots] *of Israel, and the horsemen thereof*] These words are in apposition with the former clause, and mark the sense which Elisha had of the protection afforded to the land by the presence of Elijah. Horses and chariots might be prepared in abundance, but they who had God's prophet as their guide, and his voice lifted to heaven for their help, were guarded by a might against which armies were powerless. Though the noun in the Hebrew is in the singular, it has a plural sense here, and signifies 'the chariotry', the mounted force of the nation, to which Elijah's presence is here compared.

and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them] Grief prevailing

13 rent them in two pieces He took up also the mantle of
Elijah that fell from him, and went back, and stood by the
14 bank of Jordan; and he took the mantle of Elijah that
fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where *is* the
LORD God of Elijah? and when he also had smitten the

over every other feeling, and the Oriental demonstrativeness being uncontrollable even in the lonely gorges of Gilead.

We may compare this 'taking away' with the translation of Enoch, and the Ascension of Christ, as marking the three periods of the world's history, giving witness to each of man's immortality, but in very different degrees.

13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah*] Not with any view of using it as clothing, but as a precious memento of the departed master, and as a sort of pledge of the promise which had been made to him. This heirloom was taken of the inheritance on which he was now about to enter.

14. *and smote the waters*] He acts upon the faith that he would receive from God the power which he had desired. He is in a degree to represent Elijah and therefore he acts as Elijah had done. After these words the Complutensian text of the LXX. gives καὶ οὐ διῃρέθη, 'and they were not divided'. This is represented also in the Vulgate 'percussit aquas et non sunt divisæ'. To explain this it has been said that at first Elisha took the mantle, and wrapping it together smote the waters, without any words, expecting the virtue to make itself apparent at once. When no effect was thus produced he then called upon Jehovah and the waters parted asunder. As there is no warrant in any Hebrew text for the words added in the Greek and Latin it is needless to point out that the above explanation is of no authority.

Where is *the Lord God* [R. V. **the God**] *of Elijah?*] The question does not imply any doubt of God's presence, of which Elisha had so lately seen a manifestation; but should rather be explained as an entreaty for His power to shew itself and give a foretaste of the spirit of Elijah which had been promised. 'As if he had said: Lord God, it was thy promise to me by my departed master, that if I should see him in his last passage, a double portion of his spirit should be upon me. I followed him with my eyes in that fire and whirlwind; now therefore, O God, make good thy gracious word unto thy servant: make this the first proof of the miraculous power wherewith thou shalt endow me. Let Jordan give the same way to me as it gave to my master' (Bp Hall).

But at this point there is a difficulty in the Hebrew text. Immediately following the question just noticed come two words אַף־הוּא which the Massoretic pointing connects with what follows, and which the A.V. (and many later authorities) renders by 'he also'. The next word in the Hebrew = 'and he smote'. It is apparent at once that the collocation 'he also and he smote' can only by an act of some violence

waters, they parted hither and thither: and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which *were* to 15
view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him. And they said unto 16
him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest

be rendered 'and when he also had smitten'. But if the Massoretic text be adhered to, this is the only solution, and it has been retained in the text of the R. V. by the rule which fixed the accepted text as that which was to be translated. On the margin however the Revisers give 'the God of Elijah, even He?' thus combining the two Hebrew words which cause the difficulty with the first portion of the sentence, and continuing 'And when he had smitten &c.' This, though not without some awkwardness, for אַף־הוּא nowhere else is found in the sense of 'even he', yet seems better than the solution of the A. V. The LXX. merely transliterated the difficult words by ἀφφώ, and some interpreters of the Greek have treated this as a mysterious name of Jehovah, placed in apposition with 'the God of Elijah'. There is another Hebrew word אֲפוֹא = now, which in 2 Kings x. 10 the LXX. represents in the same way by ἀφφώ. Hence some have proposed that that word should be read here, and so the Massoretic pointing preserved. This would be rendered 'Where is *now* the Lord God of Elijah?' The margin of R.V. though not free from difficulty seems the rendering to be preferred.

they parted [R. V. **were divided**] *hither and thither*] The word is the same as in verse 8. By this the Lord confirmed the promise made to Elisha by Elijah, and shewed that the spirit of the master had been bestowed on the disciple.

15. *which* were *to view at Jericho*] R. V. **which were at Jericho over against him.** See above on verse 7. They were in a position from which they could see him, and he might see them.

bowed themselves to the ground] Thus expressing their acknowledgement of him as their head, and the divinely appointed successor of Elijah. 'It was not the outside of Elijah which they had wont to stoop unto with so much veneration; it was his spirit, which since they now find in another subject, they entertain with equal reverence. No envy, no emulation raiseth up their stomachs against Elijah's servant; but where they see eminent graces, they are willingly prostrate' (Bp Hall).

16. *there be with thy servants fifty strong men*] Doubtless some from among the company of the prophets are meant. In chapter vi. 1—4 they are described as men equal to the labour of felling trees, and doing the work of building. We cannot suppose that in such a society there were many persons retained for the service of the college. As Elisha served Elijah, so they did all that was needful for themselves.

seek thy master] Throughout the narrative there is implied a much

peradventure the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley. And
17 he said, Ye shall not send. And when they urged him till *he* was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty
18 men; and they sought three days, but found him not. And

closer connexion between Elijah and Elisha than between Elijah and the rest. He is 'thy master' not 'our master'.

the spirit of the Lord hath taken him up] Compare 1 Kings xviii. 12, where Obadiah speaks of the spirit of the Lord carrying Elijah away to some unknown spot. A like expression is found in the introduction to Ezekiel's vision (xxxvii. 1) of the dry bones. 'The hand of the Lord was upon me and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord.' The 'sons of the prophets' appear to have thought that the body of Elijah might be discovered somewhere, though God had taken away his soul. They had knowledge, as is seen from the previous part of the narrative, that the prophet was to be taken away from life, but seem to have expected his body would be left lifeless near the spot where he was separated from Elisha. It cannot be supposed after what they had before said to Elisha, that the Lord would take away his master from him on that day, that they expected to find Elijah somewhere alive. 'Could they think that God would send such a chariot and horses, for a less voyage than heaven?' (Bp Hall).

and cast him] Here the LXX. adds 'in the Jordan or', an addition which seems due to a desire to express every possible place into which the body could have been thrown. If it were not on a hill or in a valley, it might perhaps be in the river. The use of the word 'cast' seems to indicate that they thought of the body of the prophet as merely the wrapping of that better part which God had taken to Himself, and that the body was of small account when the spirit had been taken from it.

Ye shall not send] There could be no doubt in Elisha's mind about the taking up of the body of his master. The garment left as a symbol of the granted petition was all that had fallen to the ground. But though he described, as no doubt he did, the glory which he had beheld and the way in which his master was translated, the sons of the prophets could not be moved from their notion that the body of Elijah might somewhere be discovered, and it is easy to understand how they would desire to give it reverent burial, if it were to be found.

17. *till* he *was ashamed*] i.e. to refuse longer so urgent, though as he knew resultless, a petition. There is no pronoun expressed in the original. Hence some have thought the expression meant 'to a shameful extent' and was to be applied to the undue persistence of the petitioners. But the same phrase occurs in Judges iii. 25 of Eglon's servants who waited till they were ashamed to wait longer. Here it implies that Elisha was at a loss how to refuse them any longer. His narrative was unprecedented in its character, and if they refused to be persuaded by that, he had no more that he could do.

when they came again to him, (for he tarried at Jericho,) he said unto them, Did I not say unto you, Go not?

18. *And when* [R.V. omits **when**] *they came again* [R.V. **back**] *to him*, (*for* [R.V. **while**] *he tarried at Jericho*)] The alteration of the R.V. of course removes the parenthesis. The Hebrew has in both places only the conjunction usually rendered 'And'. The two clauses are literally 'And they came back and he was tarrying' &c. Having acceded to their request, he waited for the return of the searching party. 'They turn back as wise as they went. Some men are best satisfied when they have wearied themselves in their own ways. Nothing will teach them wit but disappointments' (Bp Hall).

We cannot dismiss the history of Elijah, which is brought to a close in this chapter, without some notice of the powerful hold which that history took upon the minds of the Jewish people, and of the prominent place which the prophet fills in the writings of the New Testament. In the Old Testament Elijah is rarely mentioned except in these chapters of the books of Kings, yet from the way in which Malachi (iv. 5, 6) foretells his coming again we can see that the character of his mission had been fully appreciated. It was felt to be a mission suited for evil times, for times when God might be expected to come and smite the earth with a curse, if men repented not. Elijah is therefore set forth as mighty rather in works than in words. His was hardly the day for preaching. He is also, nearly always, seen to be supported by the loftiest faith, and his message is on that account attested by signs more striking than usual. On the contrary among his countrymen the decay of faith was so complete, that no work of mercy was wrought by this prophet except for a stranger, the widow of Zarephath.

The son of Sirach (Ecclus. xlviii. 1—12) speaks of Elijah as a fire, no unfit comparison, and of his word as a lamp. He calls him a prophet ordained for the reproof of the times in which he lived, and to pacify the wrath of the Lord's judgement before it brake forth into fury. The day of the Lord was at hand, and his warnings were sent by a startling messenger. And although the wrath of the Almighty was not ultimately diverted from Israel, we can see how the mighty works of Elijah stirred up a more devout spirit in the land, and thus put back the day of vengeance. This influence of Elijah's life is specially to be noted in the days of his successor. We come constantly upon evidence that even in the house of Ahab itself the prophet of the Lord was held in some esteem, while Jehovah was truly worshipped by not a few in the land, though Baal and the calves had captivated the multitude.

Hence in later days, to the mind of the pious Jew, Elijah was deemed to be ever interested in the spiritual welfare of the Lord's people, and a place was set for him at every circumcision-service. We can see too how his ministry for help was in all men's minds from the mistake which was made at the Crucifixion, when our Lord's cry of agony was interpreted into a call for Elijah. That his intervention was ever expected to be salutary is testified by the language 'Let us see whether Elijah will come and save him'. The large place which Elijah filled

19 And the men of the city said unto Elisha, Behold, I pray

in the thoughts of the Jews of our Lord's day is shewn by the mention in the New Testament of his name and his work more frequently than those of any other prophet; while both in his despondency over the evil condition of the nation (Rom. xi. 2) and in the mention of his effectual prayer (James v. 17) he is identified most closely with the people whom he so earnestly served as 'a man subject to like passions as we are'.

For such a prophet men were looking in those evil days which preceded the coming of Christ, and from a like obscurity in the desert John the Baptist suddenly emerged in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke i. 17) and all men recognised him as God's prophet. 'Art thou Elijah?' was the first question of those who saw and heard him (John i. 21) and Jesus pointed out to His disciples that the office of Elijah was truly fulfilled by the Baptist (Matth. xi. 14).

The 'taking up' of Elijah was accepted by the Jews as a testimony to the doctrine of man's immortality. 'Blessed are they that saw thee' ...says the writer of Ecclesiasticus...'for we shall surely live.' Hence the great fitness of the appearance of Elijah with Moses at our Lord's Transfiguration. Christ came and brought life and incorruption to light, the former by the fulfilling of the Mosaic law, the latter by taking again His body after it had lain three days dead in the grave. The discourse on the mount of Transfiguration was of the decease which He was shortly to accomplish at Jerusalem. The presence of the prophet who had long before been taken from this world by the chariots of heaven calmed the minds of the disciples concerning the coming decease, taught them that to disappear from among men was not to perish, and so prepared them in a measure to believe the Master's promise 'In three days the Son of Man shall rise again'. Hence at a later time they could return in joy to Jerusalem when the angel had announced that this same Jesus whom they had seen taken up, should come again in like manner as they had seen Him depart. They had seen Elijah and by that they were assured that Jesus would be sent again. Thus they became preachers of the times of refreshing when God should send Jesus, the Christ, to bless men, as Elijah in his day fain would have done, by turning them away from their iniquities.

19—22. ELISHA HEALS THE NOXIOUS WATER AT JERICHO. (Not in Chronicles.)

19. *And the men of the city*] These are the ordinary inhabitants. From the sons of the prophets they would gather that Elisha was now gifted with the spirit and power of Elijah. The situation of Jericho, near the passage of the Jordan, was such as to attract a considerable population after it was rebuilt, and for the sake of the prosperity which came to them in other ways they were content to dwell in such an unwholesome place. Now however they saw a hope of benefit and with this thought they came to Elisha. 'It is good making use of a prophet while we have him' (Bp Hall).

I [R. V. we] *pray thee*] The Hebrew is a mere interjection. The change in the English is justified because the petitioners were numerous.

thee, the situation of *this* city *is* pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water *is* naught, and the ground barren. And he 20
said, Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein. And they brought *it* to him. And he went forth unto the spring 21
of the waters, and cast the salt in there, and said, Thus saith the LORD, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from thence any more death or barren *land*. So the 22
waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.

the situation of this *city* is *pleasant*] Jericho was a part of that country which, in Gen. xiii. 10, is compared to 'the garden of the Lord'.

the water is *naught*] This word is of frequent occurrence in the English of the 16th century in the sense of 'bad'. So too 'naughty'. Cf. Jer. xxiv. 2, 'naughty figs'. And for 'naught' cf. Shakes. *As You Like It*, I. 2. 68, 'The mustard was *naught*'. *Much Ado*, V. 1. 157, 'If I do not carve most curiously, say my knife's *naught*'.

and the ground barren] R.V. **and the land miscarrieth.** The R.V. is explained in a margin 'casteth her fruit'. The evil effect was clearly in consequence of the hurtful water, for the healing of the spring is to bring a remedy for the other evils. It seems therefore that the water was such as caused the trees to shed their fruit prematurely and the cattle which fed on the herbage which it watered to cast their young untimely, and it may be that the mischief extended also to the human beings who drank thereof.

20. *Bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein*] The purity and freshness of the vessel were to typify the purification wrought upon the spring. Salt too is significant of preservation and purity. We are not however to think of this as the means whereby the healing was wrought, but only as an outward sign to point to the work which was supernaturally performed. The old word 'cruse'=a cup, is akin to the more modern 'cruet' and 'crucible', and occurs before in the A.V. (1 Kings xiv. 3).

21. *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters*] The prophet by his words carries the thought away from the sign to the thing signified, the power of God exerted at the prayer of the prophet. We cannot suppose, though no mention is made of it, that the healing was attempted without a calling upon God.

any more death or barren land] R.V. **or miscarrying.** The R.V. thus conforms to its rendering of verse 19, and gives a wider sense than that conveyed by the A.V. This is to be preferred because the root of the word applies in the first instance rather to deprivation of children than to sterility of soil.

22. *unto this day*] A note of a faithful reproduction by the compiler of what was written in some earlier document. See note on 1 Kings ix. 21. There is but one spring in the neighbourhood of Jericho, called now *Ain es Sultan*, and this is probably the same which existed in Elisha's time. Its waters spread over the plain of Jericho.

23 And he went up from thence *unto* Beth-el: and as he was
going up by the way, there came forth little children out of
the city, and mocked him, and said unto him, Go up, thou
24 bald head; go up, thou bald head. And he turned back,
and looked on them, and cursed them in the name of the

23—25. ELISHA CURSETH THE MOCKING CHILDREN AND SOME OF THEM ARE DESTROYED. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *from thence* unto *Beth-el*] Going back by the same way which he had come some days before with Elijah.

there came forth little children] The margin of R. V. gives 'young lads'. The word in the original is that which Solomon uses in his prayer at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 7), 'I am but *a little child*'. This was at the time when he had just been elevated to the throne. So that although the word may mean 'a little child' it is not necessary nor possible in the present passage to understand by it anything but such young persons as were well aware of the outrage and wickedness of their conduct.

Go up, thou bald head] As the prophet drew near to the city these youths recognised him by his garb for one of the Lord's prophets. It may be that he was wearing Elijah's mantle. Such a man would be thought fit sport for the children of the Baal-worshippers of Bethel, and they were most probably set on and encouraged in their mockery by their parents. Their home education and all the associations of the place would have given them a contempt for the true servants of God. The fault of what they did lay as much in their surroundings as in themselves. It would seem that Elisha was prematurely bald, for he lived a long time after Elijah's assumption, and this physical defect the insolent youths seized upon at once as a ground for ridicule. Elijah, the hairy man, had probably long shaggy locks, and so the contrast between the two would be marked at once.

24. *And he turned back, and looked on them*] R. V. **And he looked behind him and saw them.** The young lads had come forth from the city, and Elisha had, as it seems, passed by them, before they began their mockery. The word translated 'turned' in A. V. is used specially of turning the face toward any object. It is so rendered by A. V. in Gen. xviii. 22, 'And the men *turned their faces*'. Elisha turned about and saw in them the malice and evil spirit of their parents and kindred.

and cursed them in the name of the Lord] It was not to avenge himself. Their insult to him was but a symptom of their hatred of all that was connected with the pure worship of Jehovah. It was as Jehovah's servant and in vindication of Jehovah's honour that Elisha invoked a curse upon the revilers. 'God and His seer looked through these children at the parents, at all Israel. He would punish the parents' misnurturing their children, with the death of those children which they had mistaught' (Bp Hall).

LORD. And there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them. And he 25
went from thence to mount Carmel, and from thence he returned *to* Samaria.

Now Jehoram the son of Ahab *began* to reign over Israel 3
in Samaria the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. And he wrought evil in 2
the sight of the LORD; but not like his father, and like his mother: for he put away the image of Baal that his father

two she bears] Of the prevalence of wild beasts in the immediate neighbourhood of cities we have indications in the history of David who slew a lion and a bear as he was keeping his father's flock (1 Sam. xvii. 36), and in the story of the disobedient prophet who was torn by a lion near this very city of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 24).

tare forty and two] The punishment would touch the parents in a way which nothing else could have done.

25. *he went from thence to mount Carmel*] At which place, either for the purposes of devotion or because there also was a college of the prophets, we see from 2 Kings iv. 25, that Elisha was known to reside from time to time. The Shunammite mother in her distress knows where the prophet is to be found.

and from thence he returned to *Samaria*] In which city we learn, from the story of Naaman in chapter v. below, that Elisha had a house. The Israelitish maid also speaks of him there as 'the prophet that is in Samaria'. His most permanent home therefore was most likely in the royal city, and his visits to Carmel and other places made from time to time, as need required.

CH. III. **1—20.** JEHORAM KING OF ISRAEL AND JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF JUDAH MARCH AGAINST MOAB. IN THE DESERT THEY OBTAIN WATER THROUGH ELISHA, WHO ALSO PROMISES THEM VICTORY. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat*] How this year may be identified with 'the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat', which in 2 Kings i. 17 is the date assigned to Jehoram's accession, is not clear. But see above on that passage.

2. *And he wrought evil*] R.V. **And he did that which was evil.** The change made frequently that the same Hebrew phrase may be regularly rendered by the same English.

but not like his father, and like his mother] Jehoram was not so far gone in evil as his brother Ahaziah had been. He kept indeed to the calf-worship of Jeroboam, but put down the Baal-worship which had been introduced by Jezebel from Phœnicia. The writer makes a difference, as might be expected, between the sin of Jeroboam, grievous though that was, and the grosser idolatry which had been practised in the two last reigns.

he put away the image [R.V. **pillar**] *of Baal*] The Hebrew word

3 had made. Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam
the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin; he departed not
4 therefrom. And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster,
and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand

[*maççebah*] is first used of the stone (Gen. xxviii. 18) which Jacob set up for a pillar at Bethel, and it seems likely, as it is used here and elsewhere in the accounts of Baal-worship, that these objects of worship were not figures, but of the nature of obelisks. They were probably for the most part of stone, though those mentioned as brought out of the house of Baal (2 Kings x. 26) and burned must have been of wood. Perhaps those under cover were made of wood, and overlaid with precious metals (cf. Hos. ii. 8), while those out of doors were of stone.

that his father had made] This was no doubt some special pillar which the king had erected near his palace for his own and Jezebel's worship. This open token of devotion to the idols of the nations Jehoram put away. But there remained pillars of Baal and a house of Baal still for Jehu to destroy. Jehoram found it difficult to go far in a reformation among persons given up as his subjects were to idolatry, and all the more difficult because his own father had been the founder and fosterer of the evil.

3. *he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam*] The calf-worship was the token of Israel's separation from Judah, and had a political significance. Other kings beside Jeroboam would feel the danger of allowing the northern people to return to the temple at Jerusalem to worship. So a king who might be disposed for religious reforms would shrink from including the suppression of the calves in his programme.

which made [R.V. **wherewith he made**] *Israel to sin*] The A.V. is inconsistent, sometimes making the relative, in this oft-recurring phrase, refer to Jeroboam, sometimes to the sin. It is clear from 1 Kings xv. 26, that there, where it is first found, it must refer to the sin, and so A.V. there translates 'wherewith he made'. The other places have been made uniform in rendering in R.V.

4. *And Mesha king of Moab*] This name for the king of Moab occurs in the first line of the Moabite stone. In that inscription the Moabite king mentions his successes against Omri and Omri's successor and speaks of forty years as the time during which the conflict between Israel and Moab continued. Now Omri reigned six years (1 Kings xvi. 23) and Ahab's reign lasted twenty-two years (1 Kings xvi. 29) while Ahaziah reigned one or two years more. Thus the whole period of forty years would not be covered unless we take in the reign of Jehoram. The Moabite inscription naturally represents only the Moabite successes, but the Scripture narrative shews that the victory over Omri had been followed by a defeat in the days of Ahab.

a sheepmaster] The LXX. transliterates the word writing Νωκηδ. It occurs only here and in Amos i. 1. The other Greek versions and the Targum give the meaning. The Moabite country by its character, valleys with fertile hill-sides and streams of water running through

lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, *with* the wool. But 5
it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab
rebelled against the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went 6
out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel.

them, was eminently suited for a pastoral people; and from the nature of the tribute imposed it seems likely that all the wealth of the Moabites was in their cattle.

rendered unto the king of Israel] At the division of the kingdoms, Moab would fall to the share of the ten tribes, as it joined on to the south of the tribe of Reuben. Perhaps the tribute at first had not been so heavy as is here described, but had been increased on account of the struggles of Moab to throw off their yoke.

an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with *the wool*] R.V. **the wool of** *an hundred thousand lambs, and of an hundred thousand rams.* There is nothing in the Hebrew for 'with'. The construction is: 'he rendered these animals, the wool'. So that it seems best to take the last word as explanatory of what has preceded, and to understand that what the Moabite king gave of these numerous animals was the fleece only. The LXX. understood it so, and gives *ἐπὶ πόκων*, as we might say *fleece-wise.* That version however adds in the verse, without any warrant of the original, *ἐν τῇ ἐπαναστάσει=in the revolt*, as if to explain that this large payment had been made only on one occasion. But this is wholly without evidence, and the Hebrew would lead us to think that the payment was made every year, and this is implied in Is. xvi. 1, 'Send ye the lamb', i.e. the tribute of lambs. This being so, it is more likely that the fleeces were sent than the live stock. Indeed there would be little meaning in adding 'the wool' if the flocks were to be sent alive. It should be mentioned however that Josephus supports the A.V. saying *μυριάδας εἴκοσι προβάτων σὺν τοῖς πόκοις.*

5. *when Ahab was dead*] The sickness of Ahaziah had no doubt prevented him from taking any step during his brief reign to suppress the revolt of Moab. It is probable that during Ahaziah's time all those reconquests, that are mentioned in the Mesha tablet, were made by the Moabites, the king of Israel being able to offer no resistance.

6. *went out of Samaria the same time*] R.V. **at that time.** The time indicated is probably the occasion of the first refusal of the tribute to Jehoram. He might perhaps regard the former refusal, which no doubt had been given to Ahaziah, as prompted by the knowledge that the king of Israel was weak and unfit for war, and so there was a good opportunity to strive for freedom. Hence he would wait till the season came round, and prepare his campaign when he found that he was to be treated with the same measure as his brother.

and numbered] R.V. **mustered.** The verb implies a good deal more than the mere numbering. It includes all the inspection necessary to find whether an army is ready for war. Hence the king gathered the troops outside Samaria. The word 'muster' is the rendering of one form of this verb in A.V. (Is. xiii. 4) but in most other passages 'number'

7 And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah,
saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me: wilt
thou go with me against Moab to battle? And he said, I
will go up: I *am* as thou *art*, my people as thy people, *and*
8 my horses as thy horses. And he said, Which way shall we
go up? And he answered, The way through the wilderness
9 of Edom. So the king of Israel went, and the king of
Judah, and the king of Edom: and they fetcht a compass

is used for it. What Jehoram did was to gather together all the men of war from the ten tribes to a camp near Samaria and when all was arranged to start on his march.

7. *And he went and sent*] This Hebrew verb 'to go' is not unfrequently placed before another finite verb, without any special sense of moving from a place, but merely to express the idea of 'setting about' the act indicated by the following verb. Thus Exod. ii. 1, 'There *went a man*...and took to wife a daughter of Levi'. Cf. also Deut. xxxi. 1, 'Moses *went and spake*'.

to Jehoshaphat] The close family alliance existing at the time between the royal families of Israel and Judah made this a not unnatural request. Cf. Ahab's message to king Jehoshaphat (1 Kings xxii. 4). Jehoshaphat gives to Jehoram almost the same reply which he had given on the previous occasion to his father.

I will go up] The hill country of Moab was considerably more elevated than the lands on the west of the Jordan; not so mountainous as Gilead, but sufficient to justify the expression of Jehoshaphat, though Jehoram had not used the word.

8. *And he said, Which way shall we go up?*] These are the words of Jehoram, who leaves to his ally, the elder monarch, the decision of the line of march. They might have crossed the Jordan to the north of the Dead Sea and so come upon Moab from the north, but they would have had more difficulty then in bringing the king of Edom and his army along with them. The LXX. has 'Which way shall *I* go up?'

through the wilderness of Edom] It would seem from 1 Kings xxii. 47 (see note there) that the Edomite royal family had come to an end, and that Jehoshaphat claimed the rights over that land which had been held in former times by Solomon. Hence the 'deputy' spoken of in that passage as 'king of Edom' would be one set up and maintained on his throne by the king of Judah. We can see from this how the way through Edom would be easy and would commend itself to Jehoshaphat.

9. *So the king of Israel went*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 3. 1) tells how Jehoram and his army were hospitably and magnificently received in Jerusalem before they started on their march.

and the king of Edom] The same author says that along with his own promise of help, Jehoshaphat had pledged himself to compel the king of Edom, his subject, to take part in the expedition. So by going this way the army not only found an uninterrupted line of march but additional forces also.

of seven days' journey; and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them. And the king of 10
Israel said, Alas, that the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to deliver them into the hand of Moab. But 11
Jehoshaphat said, *Is there* not here a prophet of the LORD, that we may inquire of the LORD by him? And one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said, Here *is* Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah. And Jehoshaphat said, The word of the LORD is 12
with him. So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the

and they fetcht a compass [R.V. **made a circuit**] *of seven days' journey*] This old English phrase for taking a roundabout road is found here and 2 Sam. v. 23; Acts xxviii. 13. It is not easy to see why they should have gone so long a way about, when the country through which they were passing belonged to one of the allied kings. It might perhaps be necessary for the sake of finding provender. Josephus says that their guides led them wrong, but this is highly improbable. There must have been many persons among the Edomites who were familiar enough with all the ways into the neighbouring country of Moab.

and for the cattle] R.V. **beasts.** This change is made that there may be uniformity of rendering between this verse and verse 17.

10. *Alas, that* [R.V. **for**] *the Lord hath called*] Thus R.V. conforms to the rendering of A.V. in verse 13. The lamentation is caused by what Jehoram thinks will be their fate. And the conjunction, which can be rendered 'for' or 'that' seems to be here used to express the ground for the lament. Josephus makes Jehoram cry unto God, asking of what evil they had been guilty that He had brought them thither to give them up without a battle into the hand of Moab.

11. *Jehoshaphat said*, Is there *not here a prophet of the Lord*] He made the same enquiry before the march to Ramoth-Gilead (1 Kings xxii. 7). The prophets who would be in attendance on Jehoram would be those connected with the worship of the calves. It is however interesting to note that Jehoram ascribes to the Lord Jehovah the calling together of the armies for this expedition. We see from this how the calf-worship was not felt to be in direct opposition to the true worship. The presence of Elisha with the host shews also that there was something which a prophet of the Lord found to warrant his presence with the army. The promptness too with which he is mentioned indicates that he was well known and honoured by some who were about the king's person.

Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah] The sort of service here indicated marks one who had been in constant attendance on his master, who therefore understood his feelings, and had thus grown to understand on what occasions Jehovah might be appealed to. Hence the confidence of Jehoshaphat, 'The word of the Lord is with him'.

12. *is with him*] This expression seems to imply a more than

13 king of Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto
the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? get thee
to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of
thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay:
for the LORD hath called these three kings *together*, to deli-
14 ver them into the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, *As* the
LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were
it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of

ordinary participation of the divine Spirit. The more usual phrase is 'The word of the Lord came to' (cf. Gen. xv. 1; 1 Sam. xv. 10 &c.). And even the 'sons of the prophets' recognized that Elijah and after him Elisha were preeminently endowed with gifts from God.

went down to him] Such a man was not to be lightly summoned, and at such a crisis all reverence would be shewn to one on whose words it seemed that the chance of relief greatly depended. It may be that the phrase 'go down' is used here also because the tents of the kings would stand above the host. Josephus tells us that the tent of Elisha was outside the camp, which is very improbable. Bp Hall remarks here: 'It was news, to see three kings going down to the servant of him who ran before the chariot of Ahab. Religion and necessity have both of them much power of humiliation. I know not whether more. Either zeal or need will make a prophet honoured'.

13. *What have I to do with thee?*] An expression equivalent to a command to be gone. Cf. Mark v. 7; Luke viii. 28; John ii. 4.

the prophets of thy father] It would be no easy task, however willing Jehoram might be, to put down at once the worship of Baal. We know indeed that this was not done. Only the special outward mark, 'the pillar of Baal' (verse 2), which indicated the royal attachment to the idolatrous rites, and stood perhaps in the king's own ground, was put down. Jehoram would be forced to trust to the power of opinion to banish the worship completely. It is so much more easy to encourage wrong than to get rid of it. Hence to Elisha the acts of Jehoram would seem very fainthearted, and he would be held for a sharer in the ways of Ahab and Jezebel.

Nay] i. e. Send me not away thus. And in his next sentence he admits that the orderer of all these events is Jehovah, and confesses by implication that to Him only can they look for aid.

14. As *the Lord of hosts liveth*] Probably the use of this expression is due to the circumstances. Jehovah, set before the Jews as the Lord of the armies both of heaven and of earth, would be fitly spoken of by this title at this time. There were three armies together all reduced to the greatest straits, and brought to sue for help to the prophet of the Lord. It was a fit opportunity for pointing out that though armies may be gathered, yet the issue of their undertaking is in His hands alone. He is the living God, all others are no gods.

were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat] Thus the prophet continues the same thought. Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, is

Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee. But 15
now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the
minstrel played, that the hand of the LORD came upon him.
And he said, Thus saith the LORD, Make this valley full of 16
ditches. For thus saith the LORD, Ye shall not see wind, 17

specially the protector of His people. When they are in danger, and cry to Him, He heareth them. And the prophet is the representative of God. Jehoshaphat joins in the appeal, and for his sake mercy is extended to the less deserving also.

I would not look toward thee, nor see thee] There is no sense employed with less labour to the possessor than that of sight. Hence the expression here used implies that Elisha would not have made the faintest effort for Jehoram's sake alone.

15. *But now bring me a minstrel*] Of the power of music over the mind we have examples in the history of Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 23) and also of the use of music by the companies of prophets (1 Sam. x. 5). But neither of these instances illustrates the case of Elisha as here described. It was not employed to calm his own angry spirit, and he was alone, whereas the prophetic band in 1 Sam. x. 5 were marching in a body, and chanting some religious hymns or service. From the result described here, viz. that the hand (that is, the influence and spirit) of the Lord came upon him, we may conclude that this was what Elisha wished for, and we may suppose that while the music went on his thoughts took shape, and found vent in prayer, till at length he was prompted inwardly what to say. A striking instance of the power of music.

the hand of the Lord] The phrase is most frequently employed in the Pentateuch and the historical books to signify God's power exerted in punishment. Cf. Exod. ix. 3, 'The hand of the Lord is upon thy cattle'. See also Deut. ii. 15; Josh. xxii. 31; Judges ii. 15. But it is also used of the divine power which strengthened and supported Elijah, 1 Kings xviii. 46, and several times in Ezekiel of the spirit by which the prophet was possessed (cf. Ezek. i. 3; iii. 14, 22; viii. 1; xxxiii. 22; xxxvii. 1). The passage Ezek. xxxiii. 22 may be best quoted in illustration of the case of Elisha: 'The hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening... and had opened my mouth...and my mouth was opened and I was no more dumb.' As to Ezekiel, so here to Elisha there was given what he should speak. Josephus says 'he became inspired'.

16. *Make this valley full of ditches*] R.V. **trenches.** The valley was a torrent bed which in the time of rain would become suddenly flooded with the water from the steep sides, and from the watershed above. This would soon run away, and the excavations mentioned here seem to have been meant to dam up the water, and prevent its rapid escape, that so the army might be supplied for a good while if necessary.

17. *For thus saith the Lord*] Both the order to dig trenches, and the promise of water are prefaced in this solemn manner. It is no order of his own which the prophet delivers.

Ye shall not see wind] The verb 'see' is used elsewhere of what is

neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled *with*
water, that ye may drink, *both* ye, and your cattle, and your
18 beasts. And this is *but* a light thing in the sight of the
LORD: he will deliver the Moabites also into your hand.
19 And ye shall smite every fenced city, and every choice city,
and shall fell every good tree, and stop all wells of water,
20 and mar every good piece of land with stones. And it

not visible but experienced by the other senses. So Exod. xx. 18, 'All the people *saw* the thunderings...and the noise of the trumpet'. After a drought wind is in the East the general precursor of rain. Cf. 1 Kings xviii. 41, 45.

neither shall ye see rain] The prophet's language here implies that the cause of the coming supply of water would be rain falling elsewhere. Natural powers will bring the rain, though it shall fall at a distance from the camp, so that neither Moab nor the invading armies shall be aware of its falling.

that ye may [R.V. **and ye shall**] *drink*] Thus giving a strictly literal rendering.

your cattle] These were the animals brought with them to be killed as occasion required for food. The *beasts*, next mentioned, are the beasts of burden.

18. *And this is* but *a light thing*] For the expression cf. below ch. xx. 10. What God gives, He gives to the full. He will not only guide the forces of nature so that the bodily wants of the armies shall be supplied, but will crown their expedition with success.

19. *and shall fell every good tree*] Some persons have seen in Elisha's language here a contradiction to Deut. xx. 19, where in the siege of a city the Israelites are forbidden to cut down the fruit trees. But in that place the reference is to the trees of Canaan, where the people were themselves to settle and live. The land of Moab was not to be occupied by them, therefore they were bidden to destroy everything in it. In Deuteronomy it is expressly said, 'Thou shalt not destroy them, for thou mayest eat of them'.

stop all wells [R.V. **fountains**] *of water*] As water in the east is mostly reached by digging, what is here meant is that all such places should be filled up, so that the work of obtaining water might have all to be done over again. The R.V. gives 'fountains' in verse 25 also.

mar every good piece of land] The verb, when used elsewhere, signifies 'to give, or have, pain'. So Job v. 18, 'He maketh sore'. Ezek. xiii. 22, 'I have not made sad'. The LXX. translates here, 'ye shall render useless'. The expression is somewhat poetical, representing the land as mourning because it is rendered unfruitful. But a similar figure, though not the same word, is found Jer. xii. 4, 'How long shall the land mourn, and the herbs of every field wither?'

20. *when the meat offering was offered*] R.V. **about the time of of-**

came to pass in the morning, when the meat offering was offered, that behold, there came water by the way of Edom, and the country was filled with water.

And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them, they gathered all that *were able to* put on armour, and upward, and stood in the border. 21

fering the oblation. The term *meat offering* has become misleading to modern English readers, because it would now imply that flesh of some kind formed a part of the offering; whereas the oblation [*minchah*] here spoken of consisted (see Lev. ii. 1) of fine flour, oil and frankincense. Hence R.V. has rendered the word very frequently 'meal offering', and in some places as here, where there was no need to be specific, by 'oblation'. The time of the offering was as soon as possible after day-dawn. In a similar manner the time selected by Elijah (1 Kings xviii. 36) for offering his prayer to God on Carmel was at the time of the offering of the evening oblation. Thus in both cases God's intervention was linked to the worship at Jerusalem. 'Elijah fetched down his fire at the hour of the evening sacrifice, Elisha fetched up his water at the hour of the morning sacrifice. God gives respect to His own hours for the encouragement of our observation. If His wisdom hath set us any peculiar times, we cannot keep them without a blessing' (Bp Hall).

by the way of Edom] The fall of rain, to which the supply of water was due, would thus be unknown to the Moabites even more than to the Israelites. Josephus describes the rain as having fallen in abundance at a distance of three days' journey (*Ant.* IX. 3. 2).

21—27. THE MOABITES ATTACK THE ALLIED ARMIES, BUT ARE DEFEATED. THE KING OF MOAB SACRIFICES HIS ELDEST SON. (Not in Chronicles.)

21. *And* [R.V. Now] *when all the Moabites heard*] By the circuitous journey which the armies had made their march would be less observed, and it would only be at the time of their appearance on the frontier that the object of their expedition would become known. But the casting off the yoke of Israel, and the freeing of their land from such a burdensome tribute made the war popular in Moab, and all were prepared to do their duty against the invaders.

come up] See above on verse 7.

they gathered all that were able to *put on armour*] R.V. **they gathered themselves together, all** &c. The verb is literally, 'they called themselves together'. The expression indicates the enthusiasm with which each man appealed to his neighbour. 'To put on armour' is literally 'to gird themselves with a girdle', for to the girdle the weapon was attached.

and stood in the border] This would naturally be a height dividing their country from the land of Edom.

22 And they rose up early in the morning, and the sun shone
upon the water, and the Moabites saw the water on the
23 other side *as* red as blood: and they said, This *is* blood:
the kings are surely slain, and they have smitten one
24 another: now therefore, Moab, to the spoil. And when
they came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and
smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them: but they
went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country.
25 And they beat down the cities, and *on* every good piece of

22. *they rose up early in the morning*] When the rays of the sun would be shining obliquely on the water, and would cause it to have an unusual colour.

the water on the other side] R.V. **over against them.** See above on ii. 7.

as *red as blood*] This would be partly due to the slanting rays of the sun, and partly perhaps to the redness of the land through which the water had flowed. It was impossible for the Moabites to think what they saw to be water, for no signs of rain had been observable.

23. *the kings are surely slain* [R.V. **destroyed**], *and they have smitten one another*] R.V. **each man his fellow.** The Moabites knew of the contests which had been between Israel and Judah in times past, and might readily fancy that the peace which had been made between Ahab and Jehoshaphat had now been broken through some difference during the expedition. They would also know that the Edomite vassal of Judah was likely to seize the first opportunity to strike a blow for independence. Their own wish too was no doubt father to the thought. Hence their impetuous rush down upon the enemy.

24. *the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites*] The hasty and irregular manner in which the Moabites rushed forward, with no thought but of an easy booty, gave the Israelites an opportunity which otherwise they would not have had. Before their assailants could gather themselves for resistance they were able to put them to a confused flight. And the discovery of their mistake would paralyse the Moabites and make victory certain for Israel and their allies.

but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in their country] R.V. **they went forward into the land smiting the Moabites.** The Hebrew text presents some difficulty here. The word which R.V. has represented by 'into the land' is literally 'into it'. But as Moab (translated Moabites) has been mentioned in the previous clause the pronoun may fairly be referred to it. The verb 'they went forward' is not of the usual form and for יבו=יבאו the marginal reading of the Massoretic text suggests יכו=they smote, and this the margin of A.V. translates, 'and they smote in it, even smiting'. But the suggestion seems unnecessary. The LXX. read יבו for they give εἰσῆλθον εἰσπορευόμενοι, apparently having taken the preposition and pronoun בה for the verb בוא.

land cast every man his stone, and filled it; and they stopped all the wells of water, and felled all the good trees: only in Kirharaseth left *they* the stones thereof; howbeit the slingers went about *it*, and smote it. And when the 26
king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him, he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords, to break through *even* unto the king of Edom: but they could not. Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned 27

25. *cast every man his stone*] Thus ensuring that the ground should be made, for a long time to come, useless for the pasturage of flocks.

only in Kirharaseth left they *the stones thereof*] R.V. **until in Kir-hareseth** only **they left the stones thereof.** It will be seen from the margin of A.V. that the R.V. approaches more nearly to the literal sense of the Hebrew. What is meant to be expressed is that the only town of which the stone walls were allowed to remain was this capital city of Moab. Probably it was the only city with any solidity of walls. A pastoral people, such as the Moabites were, have very little need for fenced towns. Kirhareseth (for so the name is pointed) is the same which in Isaiah xv. 1 is called Kir of Moab, and in Jer. xlviii. 31, 36 Kir-heres. As Kir signifies 'wall' or 'fortress', there appears much probability that this was the only very great stronghold in the land, though Ar of Moab is mentioned as a fortified town (Num. xxi. 28; Is. xv. 1). The other village-like settlements were easily dismantled, and their stones served to strew and ruin the pastures. All that was attempted on the stronger place was to clear its walls of their defenders by means of slingers.

26. *he took with him seven hundred men that drew swords*] R.V. **sword.** In this phrase the singular is of the more frequent occurrence in A.V. The Moabite king desired to cut his way through the besiegers and so to escape, and he made the attempt in the direction of the king of Edom's troops, either because that was the weaker side of the allied host, or else because he thought he might be received by the Edomite king, and that they together might turn against the combined forces of Israel and Judah. Josephus suggests the former reason, saying he made his sally where the guard was relaxed. The expression 'break through *unto* the king of Edom' seems to hint that he thought to find there an ally.

27. *his eldest son*] i.e. his own eldest son, not as has been explained by some, the eldest son of the Edomite king. His thought was to offer such a sacrifice as would be most acceptable. Hence he gave what was most precious to him. And the offering was made to his own god, Chemosh (see Numb. xxi. 29). Among the heathen human sacrifice was not uncommon, and some have thought that from the sight of such offerings Abraham was brought to contemplate the sacrifice of Isaac as required of him to prove that he was not less devoted to Jehovah's service than the heathen people to their idolatry.

in his stead, and offered him *for* a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to *their own* land.

4 Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the

upon the wall] This was no doubt done to shew to the Israelites that every means had been taken by him to secure the aid of the local divinity against his assailants. Such a sacrifice they might think could hardly fail of obtaining the help sought by it.

And there was great indignation [R.V. **wrath**] *against Israel*] The word rendered 'wrath' or 'indignation' is nearly always used of the wrath of God against offenders. But it appears difficult to take it in that sense here. God's promise through Elisha was that Israel should conquer, and they were bidden to smite every fenced city and every choice city. Therefore unless we conceive that underlying God's message there was conceived some point beyond which they were not to go, and that the forcing of the king to offer his son was of this character, it is hard to see how they could be held to blame and worthy of God's wrath. They were in no position to know what the king intended, nor, when they saw him on the wall, to prevent his sacrifice. It seems better therefore to take 'wrath' in this place to signify 'wrath of men'. The word is found in Eccl. v. 17, 'All his days he eateth in darkness, and is sore vexed and hath sickness and *wrath*' (R.V.). This can be either of what the man feels himself, or of what others feel towards him. Taking the latter sense, the meaning here would be that in the minds of the men of Judah and Edom there rose indignation that they had been brought to partake in an expedition which led to such a dreadful sacrifice. If we apply the word to the feelings of the Israelites themselves, we get the sense that they were grieved and angry at so terrible a result, and so hastened to leave the dreadful scene. The margin of R.V., 'There came great wrath upon Israel', alludes to the anger of God, but it seems, as the preposition is 'against', to be better to understand that the allies were grieved at having shared in so disastrous a warfare. Josephus says the kings pitied the need which the Moabite monarch had felt when he offered up his child, and so withdrew.

and they departed from him] i.e. from the king of Moab. This seems to shew that it was the horrible act of the king which made them ready to be gone at once. It was not the land which they left. Had no such sacrifice as is here described taken place they would have prosecuted the siege according to the prophet's word. But now they withdrew in horror.

Ch. IV. 1—7. The miracles of Elisha. The increase of the widow's oil. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets*] It appears from this that the members of the colleges of prophets did not withdraw themselves from common domestic life altogether. It may be that

sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, 2 What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow 3 thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, *even* empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, 4 thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and

from time to time, during seasons of devotion, they joined the companies at Bethel, Gilgal or elsewhere, and then returned to their home duties. The man here spoken of had engaged in some transaction for which money had been borrowed, and had died before it could be paid off.

unto Elisha] This appeal shews us that Elisha was regarded as the head of the whole prophetic band. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4, 2) says this woman was the widow of Obadiah, Ahab's steward, and that the borrowed money mentioned in the text had been expended on the support of the hundred prophets whom he hid and supported. There is nothing to connect the two narratives together except that Obadiah said of himself, 'I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth', and the widow, in this story, gives an almost identical character to her husband.

and the creditor is come] It was allowed by the Mosaic law (Lev. xxv. 39—41) that a debtor and his children (and so, if he were dead, as here, his children only) might be taken as bondservants by a creditor, and the debt cancelled by their labour. (Cf. Matth. xviii. 25.) It was however provided that they should go free in the year of jubilee.

sons] R.V. **children**. That they were sons we see from the course of the narrative, but the Hebrew word is not the same here as in verse 4. So R.V. has marked the difference.

2. *save a pot of oil*] The word rendered 'pot' is from a root meaning 'to anoint' and the LXX. has here 'save the oil with which I shall anoint myself'. The word may be noticed because it indicates the poverty of the widow. It was not the finest oil, such as would be used for cooking food, that she had, but the more common kind which every Oriental makes use of after a bath.

3. *borrow thee vessels*] Another sign of indigence. But the command to borrow many gave promise of the coming help.

4. *And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door*] R.V. more literally, **And thou shalt go in and shut**, &c. There was to be no display made in connexion with the miracle. For this cause as well as to avoid interruption, the door was shut. The language of the prophet puts the faith of the widow to the test, for it was hard to conceive that one vessel, much less a great number, could be filled from her anointing pot. But as the wife of a prophet, who had been a servant of the Lord,

shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside
5 *that* which *is* full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought *the vessels*
6 to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, *There is* not a vessel
7 more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest.

she had learnt whence help could be sought, when every other source had failed.

5. *who* [R.V. they] *brought* the vessels *to her*] The R.V. marks that the Hebrew here begins a new clause with a personal pronoun. The widow's unquestioning obedience, in which her sons also imitated her, has its reward.

6. *she said unto her son*] Here the LXX., apparently only because 'sons' had been mentioned before, has here also 'sons' and later on in the verse 'and they said'. The Hebrew is far more natural. Both sons had helped, but it would be to one that her request 'Bring me another' would be addressed.

And the oil stayed] i.e. ceased to flow any longer. The English verb is a little antiquated in this sense, being now more commonly used for 'to cause to stand'. But cf. Josh. x. 13 'The sun stood still and the moon *stayed*', i.e. ceased to move.

7. *she came and told the man of God*] Feeling that the disposal of the oil should be made according to the direction of him who had told her what to do. It would seem to her that the unexpected supply could not be regarded as her own property.

pay thy debt] Like several of Elisha's miracles, e.g. the curing the noxious water at Jericho (ii. 19—22), this multiplying of the widow's oil was wrought for the help of those connected with the colleges of prophets. And as we read the frequent mention of these bodies, in the histories both of Elijah and Elisha, we cannot but wonder at the righteous zeal which shewed itself in this way in the northern kingdom. Most of the places we read of as seats of prophetic schools were in the ten tribes, and nearly all the work of the two great leaders was done among the northern people. It would seem therefore that in spite of the prevalence of the calf-worship there must have been a special manifestation of true religious feeling, just at the worst time of Israel's history.

live thou and thy children [R.V. sons] *of the rest*] Not, that is, on the remaining oil, though the LXX. gives ἐν τῷ ἐπιλοίπῳ ἐλαίῳ. The oil was all to be sold, and the money that was over, when the debt was paid, would be a means of support till the sons, now no longer forced to labour as slaves, might find a way to earn a living.

And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where 8
was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.
And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in
thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, 9
Behold now, I perceive that this *is* a holy man of God,

8—17. ELISHA PROMISES A SON TO THE HOSPITABLE SHUNAMMITE. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *And it fell on a day*] Lit. *and the day was.* In the mind of the narrator the day is regarded as defined in relation to the events about to be narrated. Cp. below, verses 11 and 18.

Elisha passed to Shunem] In Joshua xix. 18, Shunem is among the places allotted to the tribe of Issachar. It is also mentioned as the place where the Philistines encamped before the battle of Gilboa (1 Sam. xxviii. 4). It has been identified with *Solam*, a village situate on the little Hermon about 3 miles north of Jezreel. When Elisha was travelling either from Samaria or Jezreel to Carmel, Shunem lay on his road. The place is mentioned as being the home of Abishag (1 Kings i. 3) and from that is derived the Jewish tradition which makes the Shunammite woman of the present narrative to have been the sister of Abishag.

a great woman] The adjective is used to signify *wealthy* in 1 Sam. xxv. 2, of Nabal, and 2 Sam. xix. 32 of Barzillai, who is described as 'a very great man'. As the Shunammite woman had a husband still alive, it would be more natural to speak of him as 'great' in the sense of 'rich', and perhaps here the meaning is rather 'influential'. She was clearly a person of independent character, and *one who* could act when the occasion demanded it.

she constrained him to eat bread] The journeys of Elisha to and fro had somehow become known to her and she offered him hospitality. This was the usual way in the East, where houses for public entertainment were uncommon.

as oft as he passed by] Apparently the allusion is to such rounds as the chief of the prophetic colleges would make to the different centres at which they were gathered. That Elisha's visits were frequent is clear from the next verse.

9. *she said unto her husband*] The woman was not content with providing food, but out of reverence for the character of the visitor, desired to provide a lodging also.

I perceive that this is *a holy man of God*] Probably before the first invitation the woman had learnt something of Elisha's work and the reason of his frequent journeys. Now when he became their guest she had full opportunity of enquiring from Gehazi, and observing for herself the way in which he laboured to keep alive the true worship of God in the land. The existence of a family like this of the Shunammite is evidence that amid much corruption God was not yet forgotten in the ten tribes. The name 'man of God' was applied to Elijah (1 Kings xvii. 24) by the widow of Zarephath after she had beheld what great

10 which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, *that* he shall turn in
11 thither. And it fell on a day, that he came thither, and he
12 turned into the chamber, and lay there. And he said to Gehazi his servant, Call this Shunammite. And when he had
13 called her, she stood before him. And he said unto him,

things God did through his ministry. She added also 'the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth', which probably represents much of the feeling of the Shunammite when she spake of Elisha as 'holy'.

10. *Let us make*] The R.V. brings 'I pray thee' to follow these words according to the Hebrew order.

a little chamber...on the wall] The Hebrew might mean either a chamber with a wall, a walled room, in contradistinction to one built of wood, or a building above the usual roof of the house and so supported by the walls. The latter seems to be the sense required here, for it is said (verse 21) that the mother *went up* when she wished to lay the dead child upon the prophet's bed. As the roofs of Eastern houses can be reached by a staircase from outside, a chamber on the housetop (cf. Prov. xxi. 9; xxv. 24) would furnish the sort of privacy which Elisha would desire. He could also thus come in and go out without being mixed up with the movements of the household.

a bed] The articles here named form the proper furniture of an Eastern room, where a superabundance of such articles is nowhere found.

a stool] The word is that which is often rendered 'throne', and it probably in this case means the couch or divan which runs along the wall of an Eastern dwelling-room.

he shall turn in] The verb, which is the same as in verse 8, is that which Lot employs (Gen. xix. 2) in his invitation to the two angels. Preparation was made so that the prophet and his servant might be at rest, and come and go when they pleased. As a halting place in a long journey it would be very acceptable.

12. *to Gehazi his servant*] Gehazi is mentioned in this narrative, in ch. v. 20 and the following verses, and again in ch. viii. 4. He probably stood in the same position to Elisha which the latter had held towards Elijah, though the men were utterly different in character. Gehazi appears from viii. 4 to have been a person of consequence enough to be known to, and conversed with, by the king. See note there.

she stood before him] i.e. before Elisha. It is clear that Elisha's character inspired great reverence, and though the Shunammite was his hostess she did not come unbidden into his presence.

13. *And he said unto him*] i.e. Elisha to Gehazi. The prophet does not himself address the woman. Most likely, in all things which he required, Gehazi was his messenger to the house, and so the woman

Say now unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care; what *is* to be done for thee? wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, I dwell among mine own people.

would more readily reply to him than to his master. It is clear from what follows that Gehazi was acquainted with the family concerns. There may have been also in Elisha's mind somewhat of the feeling which the disciples of Christ had (John iv. 27) when 'they marvelled that their Master was speaking with a woman'.

thou hast been careful for us with all this care] Both the noun and verb in the original are used of 'fear' and 'trembling'. (Cf. Martha's care and trouble, Luke x. 41.) Hence R.V. in margin gives 'hast shewed us all this reverence'. The use of such words bears out what has just been said of the distance kept between Elisha and the family at Shunem, though they were his entertainers. The verb is used for that fear which came over the guests of Adonijah (1 Kings i. 49) when they found that David had caused Solomon to be proclaimed king. The LXX. recognises the strong meaning of the verb and gives ἐξέστησας ἡμῖν πᾶσαν τὴν ἔκστασιν ταύτην.

wouldest thou be spoken for, &c.] The prophet offers to use his influence, if it can be of any service to his hostess, with the powers of the land. And we cannot but be struck all through his history with the close intimacy which existed between Elisha and the royal family. This was more likely to occur in the reign of Jehoram, than under his brother's rule or his father's. But even of him it is recorded (iii. 2) that he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and in the expedition against Moab, Elisha declares (iii. 14) that but for the sake of Jehoshaphat he would not waste even a look on Jehoram. There must have been still a great deal of zeal for Jehovah in the northern kingdom to support the prophet, or after such a declaration he would have had little influence with the king, whereas it is the first thing that comes to his mind as a means of rewarding the attention of the Shunammite. On this Bp Hall remarks: 'It is a good hearing that an Elisha is in such grace at the court, that he can promise himself access to the king, in a friend's suit. It was not ever thus. The time was when his master heard, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" Now the late miracle which Elisha wrought, in gratifying the three kings with water and victory, hath endeared him to the king of Israel; and now, Who but Elisha?'

or to the captain of the host] If we may take Joab, in David's time, as an example, this officer possessed immense influence. The same opinion would be formed from the history of Abner, who was captain of Saul's host, and so powerful as to be able to bring the tribes who had favoured Ishbosheth over to the side of David (2 Sam. iii. 8—12).

And she answered, I dwell among mine own people] If the king or the captain of the host were to be appealed to, it must be for some case of hardship and oppression. The Shunammite shews she has no necessity of this kind, for all those among whom she lives are friends

14 And he said, What then *is* to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old.
15 And he said, Call her. And when he had called her, she
16 stood in the door. And he said, About this season, according to the time of life, thou shalt embrace a son. And she said, Nay, my lord, thou man of God, do not lie unto thine
17 handmaid. And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season that Elisha had said unto her, according to the time of life.
18 And when the child was grown, it fell on a day, that he

and relatives. There is no foe to ask protection against, and the kindred are enough to secure her against enemies.

14. *And he said*] Clearly, to Gehazi. This the LXX. adds.

Verily she hath no child] R.V. **son.** The R.V. is correct, though it seems from the whole narrative that the woman was childless. Of the great grief felt from want of children we learn in the history of Hannah (1 Sam. i. 10, 11). Gehazi had probably learnt that this was a sorrow in the family at Shunem.

15. *And he said, Call her*] It would seem from these words that the woman had gone away at once after saying she had no wants which needed a petition to the king or the captain of the host.

she stood in the door] Her reverence for Elisha kept her at the threshold.

16. *according to the time of life*] R.V. **when the time cometh round.** The literal sense of the verb is explained on the margin of R.V. = liveth, or reviveth. The phrase is the same which is used Gen. xviii. 14 to the childless Sarah before the birth of Isaac.

thou man of God] She appeals to him in the character which she felt to be most sacred; the character which had at first (see verse 9) made her desirous to entertain him.

do not lie unto thine handmaid] The verb in all its directness is common in Hebrew in very solemn expressions. Thus Num. xxiii. 19, 'God is not a man that *he should lie*', and of God's word (Hab. ii. 3), 'It shall speak and not *lie*'. The blessing promised was so great, and appeared so unlikely of fulfilment, that the woman implores Elisha not to raise false expectations in such a matter.

17. Here by rendering as in the previous verse the R.V. involves a change of order in the English but conforms thereby more nearly to the Hebrew order. 'And the woman conceived, and bare a son at that season, when the time came round, as Elisha had said unto her'.

18—37. THE CHILD OF THE SHUNAMMITE DIES, AND IS RESTORED TO LIFE BY ELISHA. (Not in Chronicles.)

18. *And when the child was grown*] During the years which had elapsed since the birth of the child the journeys of the prophet between Samaria and Carmel had no doubt still continued, and the

went out to his father to the reapers. And he said unto 19
his father, My head, my head. And he said to a lad, Carry
him to his mother. And when he had taken him, and 20
brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon,
and *then* died. And she went up, and laid him on the bed 21
of the man of God, and shut *the door* upon him, and went
out. And she called unto her husband, and said, Send me, 22
I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses,

feeling of reverence felt by the Shunammite at first, had grown, as we see from the subsequent narrative, into complete trust, a trust which sends her to Carmel when her sorrow comes, and makes her cling to Elisha as her chief hope for relief. 'As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee'.

to his father to the reapers] The whole picture is of a well-to-do home, where all was abundant. The husband is of the condition of Boaz (Ruth ii. 1), and servants of various kinds are ready for every duty.

19. *My head, my head*] The description points to an attack of sunstroke, where the first symptom is pain in the head. But the father thinks lightly of it, for such attacks are more frequent with older persons than with children. He merely tells a servant to carry the child home. Sunstroke is alluded to in Ps. cxxi. 6, and it was from it that Manasses the husband of Judith died, in the barley harvest (Judith viii. 2, 3).

to a lad] R.V. **to his servant.** The Hebrew has a definite noun 'to the servant', i.e. who was at hand to carry out any order the master might give. Hence the change in R.V.

20. *he sat on her knees till noon*] The attack was in the early part of the day, when the oblique rays of the sun appear to be most dangerous. The mother's affection shews itself in her unbroken attention.

21. *she went up, and laid him on the bed of the man of God*] Her thoughts at once go to Elisha and she puts the dead boy into the prophet's chamber, perhaps with the thought that she will bring Elisha back with her, and then he will find the child at once. Or it may be that she felt there would be less fear of intruders there. This latter reason is supported by her further action of shutting the door. What hopes she may have had we can only conjecture, but she acts as though she believed that help was not impossible. 'The good Shunammite hath lost her son, her faith she hath not lost' (Bp Hall).

22. *And she called unto her husband*] He appears to have been at no great distance; though the verb is used at times of a message sent by a servant. Thus Num. xxiv. 10 Balak says to Balaam, 'I called thee to curse mine enemies'. Cf. also Jud. xii. 1; 1 Kings i. 10, 19, 26.

one of the young men] R.V. **servants.** The same word which in verse 19 was rendered 'lad'. There were servants who could be spared though the harvest was in hand.

one of the asses] The ass was the usual beast for riding on a journey.

23 that I may run to the man of God, and come again. And
he said, Wherefore wilt thou go to him to day? *it is* neither
new moon, nor sabbath. And she said, *It shall be* well.
24 Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive,
and go *forward;* slack not *thy* riding for me, except I bid
25 thee. So she went and came unto the man of God to
mount Carmel. And it came to pass, when the man of
God saw her afar off, that he said to Gehazi his servant,

In such a country as Palestine the surefootedness of the animal is invaluable.

that I may run to the man of God] The request causes her husband little astonishment. We may therefore conclude that for religious purposes such visits had not been uncommon in the Shunammite's life.

23. it is *neither new moon, nor sabbath*] These were the principal occasions of assembling for worship, and it is clear from this history that even in Israel, while the house of Ahab was still on the throne, religious services were regularly held by the prophets in the name of Jehovah. The prophets performed all the duties of the priesthood where it was impossible to have the services of priests or Levites. Thus Elijah sacrificed on Mt Carmel before the slaughter of the priests of Baal (1 Kings xviii. 33). And for purposes of teaching and prayer they appear to have observed the days specially appointed in the Law. On the observance of the new moon cf. 1 Sam. xx. 5, 18, 24. For its institution see Numb. x. 10; xxviii. 11. In the latter passage is a description of the sacrifice to be offered; and we know from the Psalms (lxxxi. 3) that it was celebrated with the sound of the trumpet. On the observance when it came to be without any spiritual reality, see Isaiah i. 14.

It shall be *well*] The Heb. word is literally 'Peace'. But it is used in salutations and enquiries after the welfare of another, as below in verse 26. Here however the woman appears to use it as a means of putting aside further questioning. So it would be equivalent to 'Let be'. 'Say no more'. 'Let me have my way'.

24. *slack not* thy *riding for me*] R.V. **slacken me not the riding.** The R.V. thus avoids the pronominal adjective, which has no equivalent in the Hebrew. The servant seems to have been one to run by the side of the rider as a driver, and as a protection, to be ready also in case of mishap. Such runners were not uncommon in the East, being especially used by dignified persons. So Adonijah (1 Kings i. 5) and Absalom before him (2 Sam. xv. 1) provided themselves with attendants of this sort, when they were aspiring to be kings. The rendering of A.V. would suggest that the servant was riding, but the Hebrew does not warrant this, and for women to travel thus riding behind a manservant on the same beast is not like Eastern custom.

25. *to mount Carmel*] The distance would occupy five or six hours riding. (Bunsen, *Bibelwerk.*) The LXX. inserts at the beginning of this verse a further direction to the servant. 'Come, set forth and go

Behold, *yonder is* that Shunammite: run now, I pray thee, 26
to meet her, and say unto her, *Is it* well with thee? *is it*
well with thy husband? *is it* well with the child? And she
answered, *It is* well. And when she came to the man of 27
God to the hill, she caught him by the feet: but Gehazi
came near to thrust her away. And the man of God said,
Let her alone; for her soul *is* vexed within her: and the
LORD hath hid *it* from me, and hath not told me. Then 28

to the man of God to Mount Carmel'. This is a result of reading the Hebrew words twice over.

Probably from previous visits both the Shunammite and her servant were familiar with the road; for the whole narrative gives the impression that on Carmel there was a centre of prophetic teaching and religious worship, and that the family from Shunem were among the frequenters thereof. Elisha discerns her coming in the distance and is able to say to Gehazi who she is some time before she arrives.

that [R.V. the] *Shunammite*] The pronoun of the original is, except in this instance, connected with masculine nouns. It is better to consider it here as rendered by 'yonder', which the A.V. puts in italics. It is demonstrative in force, and the noun has its own article.

26. *run now, I pray thee*] The R.V. puts 'now' last of these words, 'I pray thee' is closely joined with 'run' in the Hebrew. There is a touch of deep feeling in the action of Elisha. He knows that there must be some special reason for a visit at this unusual time, and he would learn, even before the mother is near enough for him to hear her, whether there is trouble at home which has brought her to Carmel.

And she answered, It is well] The word means, as was noted on verse 23, Peace, and we can only think that she gives this answer to Gehazi's question, that she may avoid more words. She has no thought of deception, but her heart is too full for speech, at all events till she come into the prophet's presence.

27. *to the hill*] Elisha had been standing on a height which enabled him to command a view of the road for some distance.

she caught him by the feet] She fell down, and clung to his feet in the attitude of humblest supplication. Cf. Matth. xviii. 29, where the servant adopts this suppliant posture when appealing to his fellow for mercy.

Gehazi came near to thrust her away] The word in other places indicates a considerable degree of force. The servant thought that the dignity of his master was not sufficiently regarded by the Shunammite, and would have taken her away.

The Lord hath hid it *from me*] We need not conclude from these words that the prophet expected to be warned supernaturally concerning those who were likely to come to seek his help. We know from other instances that the prophets were in many cases no more enlightened than others. In 2 Sam. vii. 3, Nathan bids David do all that is in his heart for the Lord is with him. But presently he is sent to inform the king that God will not give him leave to build the temple, as he wished.

she said, Did I desire a son of my lord? did I not say, Do
29 not deceive me? Then he said to Gehazi, Gird up thy
loins, and take my staff in thine hand, and go *thy way:*
if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute
thee, answer him not *again:* and lay my staff upon the face
30 of the child. And the mother of the child said, *As* the
LORD liveth, and *as* thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.
31 And he arose, and followed her. And Gehazi passed on
before them, and laid the staff upon the face of the child;

The family at Shunem had been made by the prophet a subject of intercession with the Lord. It is therefore not unnatural that Elisha should consider that their misfortunes might be specially announced. We must suppose that, after her grief had spent somewhat of its force, she opens it to Elisha, and follows her narration with the words of the next verse.

28. *Did I desire a son*] The words are almost reproachful and make it clear to the prophet that the child is dead. Better had it been for her not to have had the child given to her, than now to have the great sorrow of losing him.

Do not deceive me] She does not use the stronger term which occurs in the earlier part of the narrative (verse 16).

29. *Gird up thy loins*] With the loose flowing garments of Orientals it is needful when haste is desired, to gather them up and bind them together so that they do not impede the traveller. This is done by a band round the waist.

take my staff in thine hand] It is not easy to see the purpose of this order. The staff was to be laid on the face of the child, but it produced no effect. It may be that Elisha thought God would allow the restoration of the child on the imposition of the staff. Some have supposed that the action was meant to teach those who knew of it, that the miracle was not to be ascribed to any external agency, but only to God's intervention in answer to prayer. Others have thought that the lack of faith in the mother, who would not go back without Elisha, caused the first measures adopted to be ineffective. Perhaps the prophet only sent on Gehazi that the mother might feel that something was being done, and be soothed in her distress.

if thou meet any man, salute him not] An injunction necessary in the East where the salutations are full of form, and consume much time. Cf. our Lord's language to the seventy (Luke x. 4).

30. *I will not leave thee*] Whether the staff sent by Gehazi may have an effect, she cannot know. Her only security is in Elisha's presence, and with him she will return to her desolated home. It seems as though the prophet had not at first intended to go with her, but she will take no refusal, so he prepares for the journey. 'She, not regarding the staff or the man, holds fast to Elisha. No hopes of his message can loose her fingers. She imagined that the servant, the staff, might be severed from Elisha: she knew that wherever the prophet was, there was power' (Bp Hall).

but *there was* neither voice, nor hearing. Wherefore he went again to meet him, and told him, saying, The child is not awaked. And when Elisha was come into the house, 32
behold, the child was dead, *and* laid upon his bed. He 33
went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon 34
the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes

31. there was *neither voice, nor hearing*] In the margin both A.V. and R.V. give 'attention' as the literal meaning of the last word. It is the same which in the account of Elijah's contest with the Baal-priests (1 Kings xviii. 29) is translated 'any that regarded'. Here it means that no sign of returning life was seen. The word is used as an adverb 'diligently' after the cognate verb 'to hearken' in Is. xxi. 7.

Wherefore he went again] R.V. returned. The same word is so rendered below in verse 35.

The child is not awaked] This does not mean that Gehazi thought the child was not dead. He knew this as well as the mother. But 'sleep', even in the Old Testament, is used for its more dreadful sister 'death'. Cf. Job xiv. 12; Ps. xiii. 3; Jer. li. 57. The common phrase on the death of a king is 'he slept with his fathers'. See 1 Kings i. 21.

32. *upon his bed*] i.e. Elisha's bed, in the chamber which was set apart for the prophet and in which the mother had left her child.

33. *shut the door upon them twain*] There is to be no witness, no parade made of the child's restoration. The act is in character like that enjoined above in verse 4.

and prayed unto the Lord] The whole narrative must be compared with the action of Elijah at Zarephath (1 Kings xvii. 17—23). There the words of the prophet's prayer are given. It is to be noted that the prayer precedes every other action. Without that all else will be of no avail.

34. *And he went up*] The verb is used in 2 Kings i. 4, of getting upon a bed. For some old beds it is very appropriate, for formerly they were much higher from the ground than is now the fashion.

and lay upon the child] (Cf. 1 Kings xvii. 21.) Probably Elisha knew of the acts of Elijah at Zarephath, and followed that example. The answer to his prayer seems to have been less immediate than in Elijah's case. Throughout the history there is a degree less of fervency in Elisha's actions and hence the less quickly availing prayer.

Comparing the two prophets, Bp Hall says: 'How true an heir is Elisha of his master, not in his graces only but in his actions. Both of them divided the waters of Jordan, the one as his last act, the other as his first. Elijah's curse was the death of the captains and their troops; Elisha's curse was the death of the children: Elijah rebuked Ahab to his face; Elisha, Jehoram: Elijah supplied the drought of Israel by rain from heaven; Elisha supplied the drought of the three kings by waters gushing out of the earth: Elijah increased the oil of the Sareptan; Elisha increased the oil of the prophet's widow: Elijah raised from

upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child
35 waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child neesed seven times, and the child opened his
36 eyes. And he called Gehazi, and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto
37 him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.
38 And Elisha came again to Gilgal: and *there was* a dearth

death the Sareptan's son; Elisha, the Shunammite's: both of them had one mantle, one spirit; both of them climbed up one Carmel, one heaven'.

stretched himself upon the child] R.V. **upon him**. So the Hebrew, and there can be no misunderstanding such as to require the noun to be repeated.

the flesh of the child waxed warm] The returning life is slowly given, but the first signs of restoration must have strengthened the zeal, and given fervour to the prayers which no doubt filled every moment of the time of waiting and watching.

35. *Then he returned*] i.e. left the bed.

and walked in the house to and fro] The R.V. inserts 'once' before 'to and fro', which is according to the Hebrew. The exertion which he had used, and the emotion and anxiety he felt, would be overpowering. Hence the need for a change of posture. Elisha did not leave the chamber but walked from end to end of the room in which the child lay.

the child opened his eyes] The second effort, supported as it was, we may be sure, by repeated prayer, obtains a gracious answer. The dead child is brought to life.

36. *Take up thy son*] Cf. Christ's words, Luke vii. 15.

37. *fell at his feet*] In token of her deep gratitude. This she shews before she will give way to the natural feeling of joy over her restored child. She bowed herself to the ground before Elisha, reverencing in him the God, who had so mightily answered his prayers.

38—41. ELISHA AT GILGAL HEALS THE NOXIOUS POTTAGE. (Not in Chronicles.)

38. *Elisha came again to Gilgal*] There are no notes of time in this narrative, or in the others, though we can see, here and there, that the events are not put together chronologically. (See below, on viii. 1.) Elisha had been at Gilgal with Elijah, but there is no need to suppose that 'came again' alludes to that visit. Gilgal (on which see note on ii. 1 above) was a centre of prophetic activity and it is probable that it was visited frequently both by Elijah and Elisha.

in the land; and the sons of the prophets *were* sitting before him: and he said unto his servant, Set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets. And one went 39 out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full, and came and shred *them* into the pot of pottage: for they knew *them* not. So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to 40 pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out,

and there was *a dearth in the land*] The first noun has the article, and the clause might well be rendered '*the* famine was in the land'. The allusion will then be to the famine foretold in viii. 1. That some of the incidents related before that chapter occurred after the famine, see note on viii. 4.

the sons of the prophets were *sitting before him*] They would naturally gather round the great prophet, made famous by a large share of Elijah's spirit, and catch at all he had to say. We can see from this story one aspect of the life in the colleges of the prophets. The members sat at the feet of some elder member, and learnt from him their duty and how to carry it out. (Cf. vi. 1, and note.) By Elisha's teaching, which would be drawn from his own experience, they would gather faith and courage, seeing that God was working in their midst, and had not forsaken Israel in spite of their sins. Hence grew the hope of a thorough reformation in the breasts of these who must be regarded as the reformers of their time.

unto his servant] Probably some one of the sons of the prophets, appointed to wait on Elisha while he tarried at Gilgal.

39. *And one went out*] As the needful services were performed by the members of the college among themselves, it was no doubt one of them who went into the field to gather such herbs as he could find.

a wild vine] i.e. some wild plant with vine-like tendrils, named here 'vine' for want of knowledge of its true name. The colocynth has tendrils after the fashion of the wild bryony in our hedgerows.

wild gourds] The Hebrew word is explained as meaning 'wild cucumber', an egg-shaped fruit with very bitter taste. But the prickly fruit of this plant could hardly be thought fit for pottage. Others think that the 'colocynth' is meant, and this was the opinion of the LXX., which renders by τολυπὴ ἀγρία, 'wild pumpkin'. This fruit might be mistaken for a melon.

for they knew them *not*] Nobody among the brotherhood had sufficient skill of plants to stop their comrade, and tell him the noxious nature of the herb he had brought home.

40. *they cried out*] The bitter taste shewed them that something was wrong, and their thoughts at once suggested that what they had eaten was poisonous. The fruit of the colocynth would produce sickness very soon, but there is no reason to suppose that there was enough in the pottage to kill.

and said, O thou man of God, *there is* death in the pot.
41 And they could not eat *thereof*. But he said, Then bring meal. And he cast *it* into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people, that they may eat. And there was no harm in the pot.
42 And there came a man from Baal-shalisha, and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley, and full ears of corn in the husk thereof. And he

O thou man of God] The R.V. omits 'thou', and thus improves both rhythm and language.

they could not eat thereof] They had only just tasted the noxious dish and so no ill effects had followed.

41. *bring meal*] He employs something which is wholesome and nourishing as a sign of the change that was to be wrought in the pottage. But we are not to attribute healing virtue to the meal that was used, any more than we should think that the salt (2 Kings ii. 21) was the means of healing the waters at Jericho.

42—44. ELISHA FEEDS ONE HUNDRED MEN WITH TWENTY LOAVES. (Not in Chronicles.)

44. *from Baal-shalisha*] R.V. **Baal-shalishah**. The name is found only here, and the LXX. writes it Βαιθαρισὰ or Βαθσαρισά, as though in this instance *Baal* had been interchangeable with the more common Hebrew prefix, in geographical names, *Beth*. The place cannot have been remote from Gilgal. The 'land of Shalishah' was close to mount Ephraim, as we see in the account of Saul's search for the asses (1 Sam. ix. 4). Probably Baal-shalishah was one village or town of this district.

bread of the firstfruits] On the custom of bringing an offering to the prophets, cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7. In that case the present was spoken of in connexion with some enquiry to be made from him. And it may have been so here, though as the offering was from the first fruits, it may have been brought as a religious duty (cf. Lev. xxiii. 14) and presented to Elisha, as the representative of God, in this time when there was no place to which such offerings could be brought. If this be so, it is another token, among many, that the law of Jehovah was not forgotten by some among the people in the northern kingdom.

full [R.V. **fresh**] *ears of corn*] This is the rendering of one word in the Hebrew, which from its use elsewhere seems to mean the first gathered and best of the corn. The interpreters explain it, some of the grain itself, some of the flour made from it. But the leading idea is its newness, hence the change to 'fresh' instead of 'full'. The passages for comparison are Lev. ii. 14; xxiii. 14, in each of which the change has been made to 'fresh' in R.V.

in the husk thereof] R.V. **in his sack**. The word is only found here. It is agreed however that it signifies some sort of bag. The A.V. took it of the covering of the grain, but the Vulgate gives *pera*, i.e., a scrip or

said, Give unto the people, that they may eat. And his servitor said, What, should I set this before an hundred men? He said again, Give the people, that they may eat: for thus saith the LORD, They shall eat, and shall leave *thereof*. So he set *it* before them, and they did eat, and left *thereof*, according to the word of the LORD.

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was

wallet. The Complutensian text of the LXX. supports this rendering, the Alexandrine version attempts a transliteration of the unusual word.

43. *And his servitor* [R.V. **servant**] *said*] The word is not the usual one for 'servant' which has occurred above in this chapter; but it is rendered elsewhere by 'minister' or 'servant' (see Exod. xxiv. 13; xxxiii. 11), and nowhere but here 'servitor'. As the word is used, in the passages referred to, of Joshua, the minister of Moses, it seems likely that Gehazi, the special attendant on Elisha, is here meant.

before an hundred men] Probably the number of the prophetic college at Gilgal. We have seen above (ii. 7) that these communities had many members, not all perhaps resident regularly, but likely to gather in full force when Elisha was visiting their society.

He said again] R.V. **But he said.** There is nothing in the text to warrant the 'again'.

44. *they did eat, and left* thereof] Compare with this the miracles of our Lord (Matth. xiv. 15—21; xv. 32—38; John vi. 5—14). In this account of Elisha there is however not much dwelling on the increase of the bread by a miracle, and we are left to accept the result as either brought about in that way, or by the appetites of the men being satisfied with a small quantity.

The LXX. omits 'so he set it before them' at the commencement of this verse.

CH. V. 1—14. THE CURE OF NAAMAN'S LEPROSY. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *honourable*] An attempt is made by the LXX. to translate literally the Hebrew expression which is the same as in Is. iii. 3. *τεθαυμασμένος προσώπῳ*, 'admired in the eyes of'. The idea is the passive of 'an acceptor of persons'. Hence 'one accepted and acceptable'.

because by him the Lord had given deliverance] R.V. **victory.** That the Lord was the deliverer is the thought of the Jewish writer. The Syrians would have put the case differently. It is however a matter of interest to note that Jehovah was not regarded by the compiler of this narrative as exclusively the God of the Jews, nor the Gentiles thought to be beyond, or deprived of, His care. He helps them though they know Him not.

deliverance unto Syria] That Naaman was the man 'who drew a

2 also a mighty *man* in valour, *but he was* a leper. And the
Syrians had gone out *by* companies, and had brought away
captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she
3 waited on Naaman's wife. And she said unto her mistress,
Would God my lord *were* with the prophet that *is* in
4 Samaria; for he would recover him of his leprosy. And
one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said

bow at a venture' and smote Ahab at Ramoth Gilead, and thus gained victory for Syria, is a conjecture of Jewish commentators for which there is not the smallest foundation. About this time the Assyrians invaded Syria and the countries round about, and it is not improbable that this was the war in which Naaman had gained his fame.

a mighty man *in* [R.V. **of**] *valour*] The phrase occurs many times, and nowhere but here is the preposition 'in' used, but always 'of'. The disease with which Naaman was afflicted must have been of a less malignant character than leprosy mostly is, otherwise he would have been physically incapable of soldierly duties.

a leper] The laws of the Jews concerning the separation of lepers from the rest of the people are given in Lev. xiii. and xiv., and are extremely stringent. Clearly in Syria there were no such regulations, for Naaman goes with the host to war, returns and lives at home with his wife and the household, and attends on the king when he goes to worship in the house of Rimmon.

2. *had gone out* by *companies*] R.V. **in bands**. The idea is of plundering parties, who made forays upon their neighbours. So we have in vi. 23, 'The *bands* of Syria came no more into the land of Israel', and in xiii. 20, 'The *bands* of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year'. The LXX. has *μονόζωνοι*, in the sense of 'girt up', 'lightly equipped', 'ready for warfare'.

a little maid] These marauders carried away captives as well as spoil. The phrase 'waited on', which follows, is literally 'was before'. Servants are said, when in their service, to 'stand before' their masters. See below, verse 25.

3. *Would God*] This interjection is found only here and in Ps. cxix. 5. There it is rendered '*O that* my ways were directed'.

the prophet that is *in Samaria*] Elisha had a house in the city of Samaria, as we see from verse 9, and also from vi. 32. The fame of the prophet, and the mighty cures which God wrought through him, must have been matter of much note ere they reached this little servant.

he would recover him] The verb, which commonly means 'to assemble' or 'gather together', is very expressive in the mouth of the Israelitish maiden, for the leper in Israel must keep himself apart, and never *be gathered* with the rest of the people. The passive is used (Num. xi. 14, 15) when Miriam was cured of her leprosy, 'she was *received in again*', i.e. joined in the company of the rest of the people.

4. *And* one *went in*] On the margin the R.V. has 'he'. But it is

the maid that *is* of the land of Israel. And the king of 5
Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the
king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten
talents of silver, and six thousand *pieces* of gold, and ten
changes of raiment. And he brought the letter to the king 6
of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee,
behold, I have *therewith* sent Naaman my servant to thee,

better to insert an indefinite nominative. It is not likely that Naaman himself was the reporter.

and told his lord] i.e., Naaman's lord, the king of Syria. The LXX. disregarding the gender of the verbal form has '*She* went in and told *her* lord': i.e. Naaman's wife brought him word of the damsel's story.

5. *Go to, go*] Naaman was so valued by the king that not a moment must be lost, but he must start to seek for his cure at once.

I will send a letter] There must have existed at this time such relations between Israel and Syria as made correspondence between the two kings possible. The two nations were at peace, as we see from verse 7, where Jehoram expresses his dread of a quarrel. The tone of the king of Israel seems to be that of one who feared Syria, and for that reason wanted to avoid a rupture.

unto the king of Israel] The king is not named, but it seems likely that the activity of Elisha was mainly in the reign of Jehoram, Ahab's son.

and took with him ten talents of silver] At this early date there was no coined money. The silver and the gold were in bars and were paid away by weight. A talent of silver is said to have been worth about £375, and gold was about ten times the value of silver.

six thousand pieces *of gold*] In phrases like this when the Hebrew expression is given fully, the inserted word is usually 'shekels', which the R.V. puts on the margin. See 1 Chron. xxi. 25; 2 Chron. iii. 9. But the shekel was in these days only a weight, as indeed the word signifies; thus we have not only shekels of gold, but shekels of silver (1 Sam. ix. 8); shekels of brass (1 Sam. xvii. 5); and shekels of iron (1 Sam. xvii. 7). When the shekel came to be a coin, the shekel of gold was worth about £2.

ten changes of raiment] Especially valued in the East, and often included in summaries of wealth, and among costly presents. Cf. Gen. xlv. 22; 2 Chron. ix. 24.

6. *he brought the letter to the king of Israel*] The Syrian king would conclude that the prophet was at the king's command, and so he had only to write to the king, and all would be done that could be done.

Now [R.V. **And now**] *when this letter*] This is not the commencement of the letter. The writer only extracts from it the sentence which contains the request. The insertion of the copula 'And' by R.V. shews this, and so represents the Hebrew more exactly.

7 that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy. And it came
to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he
rent his clothes, and said, *Am* I God, to kill and to make
alive, that this *man* doth send unto me to recover a man of
his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he
8 seeketh a quarrel against me. And it was *so*, when Elisha
the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent
his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore
hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come now to me, and
9 he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman

that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy] The Syrian king speaks as though the cure were to be Jehoram's work. But of course he only required of the king that he should use his power with the mighty prophet. This however can hardly have been made plain in the body of the letter, or Jehoram's thoughts would have turned to Elisha.

7. *that he rent his clothes*] Sometimes the act was a sign of grief as in ii. 12 above and Gen. xxxvii. 29; sometimes as here, of horror and alarm. Cf. also 2 Kings xviii. 36; Ezra ix. 3; Jer. xxxvi. 24.

to kill and to make alive] The disease of leprosy was incurable, and so the request that it should be cured was such as the author of life alone could grant. Cf. for the language Deut. xxxii. 39, 'I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me, I kill and I make alive'. So also in Hannah's song (1 Sam. ii. 6). This is a power that belongs to God only.

doth send unto me] The knowledge of Elisha's mighty acts must have been less before the mind of the king than of his subjects, or he would not have failed to see that the request might be granted by God through his prophet. 'Himself with the two other kings had been eyewitnesses of what Elisha could do, yet now the calves of Dan and Bethel have so often taken up his heart that there is no room for the memory of Elisha. Whom he sued to in his extremity, now his prosperity hath forgotten. Carnal hearts when need drives them can think of God and his prophet: when their turn is served, can as utterly forget them as if they were not' (Bp Hall).

he seeketh a quarrel against me] The verb, in this form and sense, only occurs here, but the cognate noun in the sense of 'an occasion of quarrel' is found Jud. xiv. 4. Hence the R.V. has put 'occasion' on the margin. It is only the one who feels his superiority that ventures on seeking a quarrel, and from the timid words of Jehoram we may conclude that he thought the Syrians more than a match for him; as was only natural, since they had defeated his father at Ramoth-Gilead not long before. He dreaded a renewal of such a conflict.

8. *that he sent to the king*] The prophets of Jehovah were now in no such peril as they had been in Ahab's days. Elisha has his house in the royal city, and has no fear of sending a message to the palace.

that there is a prophet in Israel] i.e. a true messenger of the God

came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood *at* the door of the house of Elisha. And Elisha sent a messenger 10
unto him, saying, Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean.

who can kill and make alive. Cf. the words of the people (Luke vii. 16) when our Lord raised the widow's son at Nain, 'A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people'.

9. *with his horses and with his chariot*] R.V. chariots. For though the Hebrew word is singular, the sense is 'chariotry', i.e., a number of chariots. In attendance on so great a man as Naaman there would be many persons on horseback and in carriages, and the display would seem such as to draw even the prophet forth to behold.

10. *Elisha sent a messenger unto him*] The princely cavalcade waited at Elisha's door, but the prophet did not come forth. We need not think of him as avoiding a leprous person, either from fear of infection, or from legal scruples. It was rather that he wished to prevent any thought of himself as the worker of the cure coming into Naaman's mind. The Syrian captain's idea was, as we can see from the sequel, that Jehovah was specially the God of the land of Israel. If he were sent to one of the streams of that land, he would be most likely, to connect, as he actually did, his recovery with the might of the God of Israel. The prophet would therefore only be the mouthpiece of Jehovah, and for this reason sent his direction by a messenger.

Go and wash in Jordan] Naaman would be quite sure that the waters of the Jordan were not a cure for leprosy, otherwise there would have been no lepers in Israel. The journey from Samaria to the river would be a great test of his faith, and would set the matter before him in a very different aspect from that in which he had before viewed it. He had come as a mighty person to present his request to a king. He is first of all brought to the humble door of the prophet, and from thence sent on a further journey to what he would naturally look on as an insignificant stream. It was not to the king, nor the prophet, nor the river, that his healing could be ascribed if it were effected. We can understand how difficult this new lesson was for Naaman to learn.

seven times] Since the seven days of God's first week, the number 'seven' has been held somewhat more sacred than other numbers. Hence its frequent mention in religious services and ceremonial. Cf. also its occurrence in the narrative of the deluge; in the appointment of the passover; in the observances connected with the cleansing of lepers, which may account for the use of the number in the present narrative. It was the number of the priests who blew with trumpets before the ark as the people entered the holy land, and for seven days they were to compass Jericho, and on the seventh day to do so seven times. These are but a few out of the instances in which the number is similarly used.

and thy flesh shall come again to thee] The expression is well suited to the case, for in leprosy the body or the part affected is covered with an incrustation, so that the flesh seems all to have disappeared.

11 But Naaman was wroth, and went away, and said, Behold,
I thought, He will surely come out to me, and stand, and
call on the name of the LORD his God, and strike his hand
12 over the place, and recover the leper. *Are* not Abana and

and thou shalt be clean] The Hebrew has the imperative 'and be thou clean', as is noted on the margin of R.V. Elisha is speaking as Jehovah's minister, thus the imperative is not unfitting, and calls to mind the words of Christ to another leper (Matth. viii. 3) 'I will, *be thou clean*. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed'.

11. *But Naaman was wroth*] He had expected that his wish would have been accomplished at once, and that more display would have been made over a case like his. The God of Israel would receive some credit for the cure of the Syrian commander. And was he to be sent off in this way, without any parade or notice, to wash in the muddy waters of the Jordan?

Behold, I thought] Literally 'I said unto myself'. The same verb is rendered 'thought' in Gen. xx. 11; Numb. xxiv. 11; Ruth iv. 4, &c.

and strike [R.V. **wave**] *his hand over the place*] The verb is the one so constantly used to describe the manner of the wave-offering (Exod. xxix. 24, 26; Lev. ix. 21; xiv. 12, 24). It is also used of waving the hand as a signal (Is. x. 32; xiii. 2), or in anger (Zech. ii. 9). Naaman's notion seems to have been that Elisha would rub his hand backward and forward, over the affected parts; or perhaps make passes over them.

12. Are *not Abana* [R.V. **Abanah**] *and Pharpar, rivers* [R.V. **the rivers**] *of Damascus*] There is a marginal reading *Amanah* in the Hebrew, but it is not well supported. The Abanah has been identified with the larger of the two rivers which now water Damascus. Its present name is 'Barada', and the Arabic version of this verse writes 'Barda' for Abanah. The second river is now named 'Awaj' and does not flow so close to the city, but one branch of it is still called 'Wady *Barbar*' in which we may probably trace the remnant of the ancient name 'Pharpar'. Compared with the Jordan, these, especially the Abanah, must have appeared far superior, both in waters, for the Jordan is often muddy, and in the beauty of the scenery through which they flowed. Robinson (II. 255) describes the Jordan as a 'deep, sluggish, discoloured stream'.

Bp Hall observes here: 'Nowhere shall we find a truer pattern of the disposition of nature: how she is altogether led by sense and reason: how she fondly judges of all objects by the appearance: how she acquaints herself only with the common road of God's proceedings: how she sticks to her own principles: how she misconstrues the intentions of God: how she over-conceits her own: how she disdains the mean conditions of others: how she upbraids her opposites with the proud comparison of her own privileges. Nature is never but like herself. No marvel if carnal minds despise the foolishness of preaching, the simplicity of sacraments, the homeliness of ceremonies, the seeming inefficacy of censures. These men look upon Jordan with Syrian eyes:

Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage. And his servants came 13
near, and spake unto him, and said, My father, *if* the prophet had bid thee *do some* great thing, wouldest thou not have done *it?* how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean? Then went he down, and dipped 14
himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God: and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

And he returned to the man of God, he and all his 15

one drop of whose water, set apart by divine ordination, hath more virtue than all the streams of Abanah and Pharpar.'

13. *his servants came near*] As the chief ministers of the king are called 'servants' though they probably are of distinguished rank; so the servants of Naaman were probably persons nearly his equals in everything except reputation, and so they could come and speak freely to him, without fear of giving offence.

My father] One of them of course was spokesman for the rest. There is no other instance where servants address their master in such terms. Elisha's exclamation when Elijah was taken away from him does not come into comparison. Joseph says (Gen. xlv. 8) that God has made him a father to Pharaoh, but this is not quite the same sort of relationship. The word however, which because it is unusual some have endeavoured to explain as a corruption, indicates the affectionate relations which existed between Naaman and those about him, and prepares us for his ready listening to their persuasion.

some *great thing*] They are thinking perhaps of some deed of prowess, befitting the 'mighty man of valour', or some fatiguing journey by way of pilgrimage.

14. *Then went he down*] His rage had first gone down, and thus he was in a fitter condition to undertake the journey commanded him.

and dipped himself *seven times*] Not only in the journey to the river, which was without any display, and merely terminated in some lonely spot on the river's brink, but also in the repeated dippings was the faith of Naaman put to the test. For if we may judge from the fall of the walls of Jericho, which stood unmoved till the last time the ark was carried round them, it seems probable that the cure did not shew itself till the whole of the ablutions were completed.

like unto the flesh of a little child] In striking contrast to its former foul and diseased condition, it now became fresher and fairer than was natural in a full grown man.

15—19. NAAMAN'S GRATITUDE. HIS IMPERFECT KNOWLEDGE MAKES HIS PRACTICE IMPERFECT. (Not in Chronicles.)

15. *And he returned to the man of God*] He was a stranger in

company, and came, and stood before him: and he said, Behold, now I know that *there is* no God in all the earth, but in Israel: now therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing of
16 thy servant. But he said, *As* the LORD liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none. And he urged him to take *it*;
17 but he refused. And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I

Israel, like the Samaritan among the ten lepers whom our Lord cured, but like him he also manifested his thankfulness. He came back with all his company, that the thanksgiving might lose nothing of its fulness, and in the presence of them all, proclaims the new knowledge which he has gained, how he has found that 'there is no god who can deliver after this sort'.

came, and stood before him] His feelings and attitude are alike changed, and so the prophet now shews himself to him. Naaman has begun his lesson in the school of Jehovah and Elisha is ready to encourage his weak steps.

no God in all the earth, but in Israel] He has still his notion of different gods assigned to different lands, and does not conceive that Jehovah may be the God of all the earth. He is the God of Israel only, but all that are called gods elsewhere are not to be compared to Him.

take a blessing [R.V. **present**] *of thy servant*] Because with a present there generally is given good wishes and benediction, the Hebrews frequently used 'blessing' as here for 'a gift'. Thus (Gen. xxxiii. 11) Jacob calls the present which he had prepared for Esau by this name. 'Take I pray thee, my *blessing*'. Cf. also Jud. i. 15; 1 Sam. xxv. 27; xxx. 26 (with margin).

16. *I will receive none*] Just as in the earlier part of his conduct Elisha had done everything to direct Naaman's attention to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease; so now he will have no gift for himself, lest thereby he should mar the effect of the previous lesson. Heathen priests and prophets were noted for the greed with which they received and demanded rewards. With the servants of the God of Israel there could be nothing of this kind. It was not of them, except as instruments, that the help came, and the gratitude must be paid where it was due. So in spite of much urging, Elisha would receive nothing. He *stood before the Lord*, and feeling whose servant he was, he must direct all honour to be offered to his Master.

17. *And Naaman said, Shall there not then, I pray thee, be given*] R.V. **If not, yet I pray thee, let there be given.** The reason for the variation lies in a comprehension of the grammatical force of the Hebrew. There is no mark of interrogation in the verse, but neither is there any word for 'if' which the R.V. gives. But the Hebrew can express a hypothetical clause without the insertion of any such particle. Literally the original has 'And Naaman said, and not' &c. by which is meant 'and if not &c.', i.e. 'if it may not be as I wish, and you will not receive a present, yet &c.' Thus in Gen. xliv. 22 the literal render-

pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth? for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the LORD. In this thing the LORD pardon thy servant, *that* when my 18
master goeth *into* the house of Rimmon to worship there,

ing is 'and he leaves his father, and he will die', which the A.V. rightly represents by 'for if he leave...he will die'. And more like the present example is 2 Sam. xiii. 26, where David has objected to Absalom's too liberal invitation, 'And Absalom said, and not [i.e. and if it may not be] yet let my brother Amnon go with us'. The LXX. renders rightly καὶ εἰ μή.

two mules' burden of earth] Naaman still has no notion of Jehovah but as a territorial deity. He thinks therefore that by carrying with him a quantity of the soil of Israel, he may provide a place for acceptable sacrifice to Him in his country of Syria. It was holy ground and would sanctify all that it came near.

will henceforth offer neither burnt offering] The other so-called gods are worth nothing. This much he has learnt, and so he will himself pay them no homage. But it would be too hard a thing to expect from so new a convert strength enough to become a witness for Jehovah. Hence his petition to God, to which Elisha gives a merciful answer.

18. *the Lord pardon thy servant*] Naaman can see the inconsistency of his conduct. He will offer no more sacrifices to Rimmon. But the king his master worships in Rimmon's temple, and Naaman must be in attendance, and must bow when the king bows down, or he will give offence. He sets his difficulty before Elisha, and Elisha, regarding the degree of his faith and obedience as all that could be expected from his amount of light, gives him a comforting answer. We must judge both Naaman and the prophet according to the times in which they lived. It was impossible for the former at once to cast away all his old ideas. His strongest wish, for some of the soil of the holy land to carry home, bespeaks the darkness in which he had lived and was living, and a new creature is not to be made in a moment out of men like Naaman. Elisha on the other hand had no light such as we have concerning God's message to the heathen; the Jew has not either in ancient or in modern times been a missionary, and we need not judge Elisha hardly, because he felt no call to rebuke the half converted heathen for his imperfect service. The Lord had not yet given His message to any of the chosen people 'Go ye out into all the world'.

Rimmon] The god of the Syrians of Damascus. The name is most likely derived from the Hebrew word *rûm* = to be high; and so signifies 'most high', a natural title to apply to a divinity. The Syrians had the name Tab-Rimmon (1 Kings xv. 18) = good is Rimmon, among the names of their royal family, and the existence of a place called Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo (Zech. xii. 11) would seem to indicate that the worship of Rimmon had at some time prevailed in a part of Palestine. Rimmon is mentioned nowhere in the Bible but in this passage.

and be leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself *in* the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself *in* the house of
19 Rimmon, the LORD pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, Go in peace. So he departed from him a little way.

20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands *that* which he brought: but, *as* the LORD liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat
21 of him. So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw *him* running after him, he lighted down from
22 the chariot to meet him, and said, *Is all* well? And he

19. *Go in peace*] We are not to consider this answer as implying that service of God and service of Rimmon might be combined without any incongruity. The prophet appears rather to be willing to leave the good seed already sown to bear fruit in due season. Being sown of God it must fructify, and peace would be the result of its further development.

a little way] The expression literally signifying 'a length of country' is very indefinite. It is found only here and in Gen. xxxv. 16; xlviii. 7. We may estimate its length roughly by considering how far Gehazi could have gone if he had to overtake a mounted cavalcade. It could not be very far.

20—27. GEHAZI'S LIES AND THEIR PUNISHMENT.
(Not in Chronicles.)

20. *hath spared Naaman this Syrian*] R.V. **this Naaman the Syrian**. The pronoun qualifies the whole expression. Gehazi had been in attendance on Elisha, and heard the whole conversation. There seems to have been no need for an interpreter. The dialects of the whole country were no doubt much akin, and the people could readily understand each other.

as *the Lord liveth*] How little the words meant for Gehazi we can see, when they come to his lips amid his thoughts of the deceit he is meditating. They had a different force when Elisha used them, in verse 16.

21. *And when Naaman saw* him [R.V. **one**] *running after him*] On an Eastern road the travellers were not numerous, and any one in hot pursuit would at once be noticed, and it would be felt that he was anxious that the travellers in front should halt.

he lighted down from the chariot to meet him] As Gehazi approached, Naaman would recognise him; for Gehazi may have been the messenger first sent to bid the Syrian go and wash in Jordan, and he had clearly been by his master's side during the subsequent interview. Anxious therefore to shew his gratitude, the superior lights down from his chariot,

said, *All is* well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments. And 23
Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid *them* upon two of his servants; and they bare *them* before him. And when he 24
came to the tower, he took *them* from their hand, and

This was an act of much condescension, and is an index of Naaman's feeling.

22. *My master hath sent me*] Naaman would naturally rejoice at hearing that circumstances had wrought for an acceptance of the present, which for himself the prophet had refused.

from mount [R.V. **the hill country of**] *Ephraim*] The Gilgal mentioned in the previous chapter [iv. 38] seems to have been near the hill country of Ephraim. There, we know, there was a college of prophets, and in the neighbourhood may have been others. From all these centres the members would come to Elisha for counsel. Gehazi uses one of the probably common incidents of the prophet's life to form the foundation for his deceit. The communities of prophets would naturally be poor, and few things were more likely than that they should reach Samaria in need both of money and clothing. The story was full of plausibility.

a talent of silver] Though a large sum to ask for as aid to the prophets, it would appear but little to the man who had brought ten times as much with him, in addition to six thousand shekels of gold. Hence he gives him twice what he asks, which Gehazi must have counted a wondrous gain.

23. *bound two talents of silver in two bags*] The money was put into the bag, and the opening tied up. The word translated 'bags' (LXX., θύλακοι) occurs in the list of female finery in Isaiah iii. 22 and is rendered by R.V. 'satchels'. Probably the bag was of an ornamental character, as the root word signifies 'to engrave'. Perhaps there was some embroidery, or network in its formation.

laid them *upon two of his servants*] For the money must have been of considerable weight, and Naaman having had no opportunity of doing honour to Elisha, would be the more anxious to pay all attention to Gehazi.

24. *when he came to the tower*] R.V. **hill**. The word (Heb., *Ophel*) is often used in connexion with the description of the wall of Jerusalem (2 Chron. xxvii. 3; xxxiii. 14; Neh. iii. 26, 27; xi. 21). From its use in Micah iv. 8, of Mount Zion, the sense 'hill' rather than 'tower' appears well established. The margin of A.V., has here 'secret place' as also the LXX., but that seems to have come from connecting the word with a root of slightly different consonants (אפל instead of עפל). The question arises: What hill is meant? And it appears best to

bestowed *them* in the house: and he let the men go, and
25 they departed. But he went in, and stood before his
master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence *comest thou*,
26 Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither. And
he said unto him, Went not mine heart *with thee*, when the
man turned *again* from his chariot to meet thee? *Is it*
a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and
oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and men-
27 servants, and maidservants? The leprosy therefore of
Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever.

understand it of some eminence near the house of Elisha. All Samaria was hilly in character (see 1 Kings xvi. 24). The narrative by this allusion to a locality, as though it were well known, shews its historic character, and appears to go back in its early form to close upon the date of the events.

he took them *from their hand*] Though they were heavy enough for two men, yet he must contrive to carry them himself that he may attract less notice, and run no risk of being found out.

25. *and stood before his master*] He would let his absence be as little noted as possible. In the East the servants are usually kept in waiting. Hence the phrase 'to stand before' is frequent in connexion with Oriental service. Thus David 'stands before' Saul (1 Sam. xvi. 21, 22), so of Abishag (1 Kings i. 2). See also 1 Kings x. 8; Dan. i. 5, &c.

26. *Went not mine heart* with thee] The Hebrew has nothing to represent the last two words, as will be seen from the italics both of A.V. and R.V. But the rendering is that of the LXX., and is probably correct. The verb takes up that which Gehazi had used, 'Thy servant *went* no whither'. On a former occasion Elisha in Gehazi's presence (iv. 27) had said of some event 'the Lord hath not told me', but now he finds that in spirit his master had been with him, and was aware of all that had occurred.

Is it *a time to receive money*] The opportunity of Naaman's visit had been used by Elisha to direct the thoughts of the heathen officer to Jehovah alone as the healer of his disease. Hence he had never shewn himself to Naaman till the cure was complete, and had steadily refused any present lest it should be thought that he deemed himself in any way instrumental in the recovery. Such conduct must have impressed Naaman greatly, and now Gehazi has done his best to obliterate the impression. In the enumeration of all the grand possessions which the ill-gotten talents were to purchase Elisha shews Gehazi that he has been reading all his thoughts.

27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee*] 'Oh heavy talents of Gehazi', says Bishop Hall, 'oh the horror of this one unchangeable suit...How much better had been a light purse and a homely coat, with a sound body and a clear soul'.

And he went out from his presence a leper *as white* as snow.

And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha, Behold 6
now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us.
Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan, and take thence a
every man a beam, and let us make us a place there, where

a leper as white *as snow*] Both here and elsewhere in this phrase, the words 'as white' are inserted to explain the comparison. Cf. Num. xii. 10. As the incrustation of leprosy is sometimes rather rose-coloured than white, it seems likely that the point of the comparison is not the whiteness only, but that likeness which it bears to a light downlike covering, as if the limbs had been sprinkled over in the manner, though not always with the colour, of snow.

CH. VI. 1—7. ELISHA CAUSETH AN AXE LOST IN THE RIVER TO FLOAT. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha*] There is nothing to indicate which out of the various prophetic communities is here spoken of. But by the proposal which follows, that they should go to the Jordan, and bring from thence each man his beam, we may conclude that the place was not far from the river. The station nearest to the Jordan of which we are told is Jericho, and it may be that there the company had grown beyond their buildings.

the place where we dwell with [R.V. before] *thee*] The R.V. is correct, and gives more truly the picture of Elisha's relation to these societies. From the other parts of the history we can gather that he made visits to the several settlements from time to time. And when he arrived, and while he remained, the members were about him as scholars around a teacher. They sat before him (iv. 38). Hence the preposition in this verse.

is too strait for us] The religious activity of the prophetic schools must have been very great during the life of Elisha, and must also have produced its effect upon the life of the nation. We cannot regard these societies merely as retreats from the world, where the servants of Jehovah retired in despair. Such families as that at Shunem, spoken of in the last chapter, must have been of frequent occurrence. And the increase of the number of prophets may be taken as a sign that true religion was growing in the land. 'It is a good hearing that the prophets want elbow-room.' (Bp Hall.)

2. *take thence every man a beam*] The Jordan valley was well timbered. We see from this, as from previous passages, that these men did for themselves such work as they required. Here they are ready to be their own carpenters. Naturally such a body would neither wish for, nor be able to erect, anything but a building of the simplest sort.

make us a place there] They propose to provide entirely new quarters in a new spot in the valley of the Jordan.

3 we may dwell. And he answered, Go ye. And one said,
Be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants. And he
4 answered, I will go. So he went with them. And when
5 they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one
was felling a beam, the axe head fell into the water: and he
6 cried, and said, Alas, master, for it *was* borrowed. And the
man of God said, Where fell it? And he shewed him the
place. And he cut down a stick, and cast *it* in thither; and
7 the iron did swim. Therefore said he, Take *it* up to thee.
And he put out his hand, and took it.

3. *go with thy servants*] It seems as though they contemplated a removal all at once. In Eastern countries little is thought of camping out in the open country; and this the society were prepared to do while their humble shelter was in preparation. Elisha's presence would give countenance and encouragement to the workers.

4. *when they came to Jordan*] From what follows we see that they went close to the river. Probably the timber would be best grown at the water's edge.

5. *a beam*] The Hebrew noun has the article, the force of which may be '*his* beam', that one to which he was specially devoting himself.

the axe head] Literally 'the iron'. The word is the same as in verse 6. But the iron part of the hatchet is the head.

it was *borrowed*] When the whole society were to turn wood-cutters, it was not likely that axes would be in readiness for every one. This man had borrowed his, and was, as a good man would be, more troubled about its loss than if it had been his own.

6. *He cut down a stick, and cast* it *in thither*] The account is extremely simple, and does not at all fit with the explanations of those who would represent Elisha as holding the stick and when he had put it into the hole for the handle, thus raising the iron from the bottom. The stick is cast on the surface of the water.

and the iron did swim] R.V. **and made the iron to swim.** The voice of the Hebrew verb requires the rendering of R.V. The stick cast into the river was the outward symbol which the prophet used, as a sign of what was to be miraculously brought to pass. The iron was to float as the piece of wood did. In the same manner the salt at Jericho, and the meal at Gilgal, were signs the one of the purity, the other of the wholesomeness, which was to be wrought in the bad water, and the noxious pottage.

7. *Therefore said he*] R.V. **And he said.** The conjunction is the simple copulative, and nothing more is needed in the English.

he put out his hand, and took it] Elisha here wrought, as on previous occasions, for the help of the sons of the prophets. Now however his power is exercised for an individual, while in the other cases recorded, it was for the benefit of the whole society. Critics have objected that there is no adequate reason for the exercise of supernatural power, but

Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took 8
counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place
shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the 9
king of Israel, saying, Beware that *thou* pass not such a
place; for thither the Syrians are come down. And the 10
king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told
him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once
nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was 11
sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and

the loser of the axe was sorely troubled ere he came to Elisha, as his cry 'Alas! master' shews. There was no chance of supplying what was lost except with some miles of journey, and perhaps poverty was an obstacle too. Beside which the whole community would be encouraged, when by this act Elisha made clear to them that they had God's blessing on their new undertaking.

8—23. ELISHA MAKES KNOWN THE KING OF SYRIA'S PLANS. THE SOLDIERS SENT AGAINST ELISHA ARE SMITTEN WITH BLINDNESS, AND HE LEADS THEM INTO SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *Then* [R.V. **Now**] *the king of Syria warred against Israel*] Whether this was before the cure of Naaman or after we have no indication. It is clear however that Syria was a most formidable adversary to Israel at this period. The inroads described first in this chapter appear to have been made by bands of plunderers, of course with the knowledge and under the direction of the king. But when Benhadad (see verse 24), who probably was the king here alluded to, gathered all his host and came and besieged Samaria the warfare was of a different kind. Josephus calls the Syrian king 'Adad'.

9. *And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel*] As against Syria, the power of Elisha would be most naturally exerted in favour of Israel. In spite of the strong language used against Jehoram (iii. 13, 14) and his family on account of their sins, God's prophet had still much hope of the nation, and as we have seen in several instances, not without good reason. His action here saves not only the king, but the people also.

are come [R.V. **coming**] *down*] They were lying or intending to lie in ambush ready to spring upon and capture any that came in their way. Josephus says the king of Israel was starting on a hunting party when Elisha warned him.

10. *sent to the place*] A single messenger, against whom the Syrians would do nothing, would be enough to find out whether the prophet's warning were true.

not once nor twice] i. e. but several times.

11. *Therefore* [R.V. **And**] *the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled*] Because he saw on all these occasions that the opportunity he had looked for was taken away. He appears to have been acting on information which told him of expected movements of the forces of

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said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us *is* for the
12 king of Israel? And one of his servants said, None, my
lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that *is* in Israel,
telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest
13 in thy bedchamber. And he said, Go and spy where he *is*,
that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him,
14 saying, Behold, *he is* in Dothan. Therefore sent he thither
horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by
15 night, and compassed the city about. And when the
servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth,
behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and

Israel. When his design was frustrated over and over again it was natural to think of treachery among his own people.

12. *Elisha, the prophet that* is *in Israel*] This mention of Elisha points to such a knowledge of him as might have been gained through Naaman's cure. It may however be that communications of other kinds passed between Syria and Israel, and that in some of these the precise nature of Elisha's conduct was described. Nothing in the story of Naaman could suggest that Elisha gave information to the king of Israel.

13. *go and spy*] R.V. **see.** The original is the ordinary verb rendered 'see' in other places.

that I may send and fetch him] And thus put an end to the source of information enjoyed by the king of Israel.

Dothan] Only mentioned in the canonical books of the O.T. here and in the history of Joseph (Gen. xxxvii. 17). In the book of Judith (iv. 6; vii. 3, 18; viii. 3) it occurs in the account of Holofernes' campaign against Bethulia. It was not far from Shechem. It appears from this narrative that Elisha had a residence there. According to Jerome the place was twelve Roman miles north of Samaria. We can see from this history that the Syrians were able at this time to penetrate very far into the country of Israel.

14. *a great host*] Greatness is comparative. Here was a company such as could be led by Elisha to Samaria, and fed easily when they reached that city. But no doubt they were formidable when employed for the capture of a single man of peace like Elisha, and they had taken up their position by night.

compassed the city about] i.e. beset all the gates, so that none could escape without their knowledge.

15. *the servant*] The word is the same which in iv. 43 was rendered 'servitor'. It is the special and more personal servant. Hence the R.V. puts 'or, minister' in the margin.

a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots] R.V. **an host with horses and chariots was round about the city.** The words are not the same in Hebrew as in the previous verse where 'compassed' was used. Literally 'an host and horses &c.' The horses and chariots were in addition to the footmen, who alone were spoken of in verse 14.

chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master, how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for *they* 16
that *be* with us *are* moe than *they* that *be* with them. And 17
Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and behold, the mountain was full *of* horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And 18
when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness.

16. they *that* be *with us*] Elisha speaks as a man whose eyes are opened, and who in consequence is sure of Jehovah's protection, whether he beholds the angelic host about him or not.

17. *open his eyes*] To the servant there was need of a more manifest vision, and for this Elisha prays, and God vouchsafes to grant it, that the servant may become as confident as his master. It is not that the troops may be gathered that Elisha prays, they are there already, but that the servant may have a seeing eye bestowed upon him to discern how well he and his master are protected.

the mountain was full of *horses and chariots of fire*] Just as in chapter ii. 11 we read of appearances so described. It is not necessary that we suppose the vision to have been of literal horses and chariots. The heavenly host was seen encamped about God's servant in such wise as to disperse all fear.

round about Elisha] The enemy compassed the town all round, but there was an inner circle filled by God's army. Dothan stood on an eminence and so the summit could thus be encircled, and the barrier against the Syrians appear complete.

18. *And when they came down to him*] As the words stand, 'they' must refer to the Syrian troops, and to understand the sentence we must suppose that Elisha and his servant, the latter encouraged by the heavenly vision, had come forth from the city and been able to pass the gate. After this the Syrians followed them, and on their approach Elisha prayed that they might be smitten with blindness. Some have however thought that 'to him' is an error for 'to them', and have referred the verb to Elisha and his servant. Thus the sense would be: 'When Elisha and his servant came down to the enemy, as they were emboldened to do, then Elisha prayed &c.' But there is no such great difficulty in understanding the existing text, as to warrant us in accepting a conjecture which seems only supported by one, the Syriac, version. It was quite in the character of Elisha to go forth with his now courageous servant, and the Syrians at first would let them pass out so far that they might be surrounded directly by the waiting troops.

Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness] What seems to have been sent upon the men was an illusion which prevented them from seeing correctly what was before them. Josephus explains it as a mist (ἀχλύς) whereby they were prevented from recognising Elisha. The

And he smote them with blindness according to the word
19 of Elisha. And Elisha said unto them, This *is* not the way,
neither *is* this the city: follow me, and I will bring you
to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.
20 And it came to pass, when they were come *into* Samaria,
that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these *men*, that
they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they
21 saw; and behold, *they were* in the midst of Samaria. And
the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My
22 father, shall I smite *them?* shall I smite *them?* And he

word, which is plural in form, occurs only here and in Gen. xix. 11. It denotes the seeing of something unreal instead of the true image. Thus these men could go with Elisha to Samaria, not knowing to what place he was leading them.

19. *This* is *not the way, neither* is *this the city*] i.e. the way to Elisha, and the city where you shall find him.

I will bring you to the man whom ye seek] But you shall find him in a place where you shall not be able to arrest him. Thus does Elisha use the glamour, or hallucination, under which these men were cast, to secure his own safety.

But [R.V. and] *he led them to Samaria*] That there he might make himself known unto them; and they, still under the influence which had been supernaturally cast over them, followed him without alarm till they were within the walls of the strongly fortified royal city.

20. *open the eyes of these men*] i.e. give them again the true perception of what is round about them. The prayer has been twice used by Elisha in this narrative, but for two different kinds of illumination. His servant was enabled to look beyond material surroundings and to recognise that there is a spiritual world in close proximity to the natural, that God and His ministers are not far from every one of us. To these Syrian soldiers natural sight was restored, after their eyes had been for a time holden (cf. Luke xxiv. 16) that they might be brought into the power of the king of Israel. God has brought the enemy of His prophet into a snare.

behold, they were *in the midst of Samaria*] Apparently, as Josephus says, brought where the king of Israel, with his troops, might fall upon them, and slay them, had it been permitted. At once they would see that they were prisoners, instead of making a prisoner; and their minds would be as full of the expectation of death, as Jehoram's was of eagerness to kill them.

21. *My father*] The form of address is strange from the mouth of the king even though he be described (iii. 2) as better than his father and his mother. It is however one more token of the great influence exercised in Israel by the prophets Elijah and Elisha. In the present instance Jehoram could hardly undertake to smite the prisoners brought into his hands by the prophet without Elisha's consent, though his

answered, Thou shalt not smite *them:* wouldest thou smite *those* whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master. And he 23
prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.

And it came to pass after this, that Ben-hadad king of 24

repeated question 'Shall I smite them? Shall I smite them?' shews how eager he was to destroy them.

22. *wouldest thou smite* those *whom thou hast taken captive*] The prophet points out that the men are not even captives whom the king himself has taken. Had they been so, yet the laws of war would have forbidden their slaughter at such a time and in cold blood. Much more is it unlawful to slay these, who are God's prisoners. Some have preferred to take the sentence as not interrogative. 'Those whom thou hadst taken prisoners thou mightest be allowed to slay, but not these.' Deut. xx. 13 sanctions the slaying prisoners of war; but it is doubtful whether the grammar of the original in this verse can be taken as anything but interrogative.

set bread and water before them] It is manifest that the prophet was setting forth a higher degree of humanity than was usual towards prisoners. We need not therefore be surprised, if in the former clause of the verse he does not speak according to the sterner precept of Deuteronomy, which was laid down in order that the idolaters might be exterminated from Canaan.

23. *he prepared great provision for them*] We can see from the use of the phrase 'bread and water' in other passages that the words embrace all kinds of food, and hence that Elisha's injunction was equivalent to saying 'Feed them well, and let them go'. Cf. for the phrase Deut. xxiii. 4; 1 Kings xviii. 4 and 1 Sam. xxv. 11. In the last passage the extent of meaning in the words may be estimated by the gifts which, in verse 18, Abigail takes to David and his men.

the bands of Syria] i.e. these marauding parties, protected by the king of Syria's authority.

came no more] The generous treatment had its effect. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 44) says 'King Adad was wonderstruck at the strange occurrence, as well as the manifestation and the power of the God of the Israelites, and at the prophet in whom the divine spirit was so manifestly present, hence he determined through fear of Elisha no longer to attack the king of Israel secretly, but decided to make open war'.

24—31. BENHADAD BESIEGES SAMARIA. THE CITY SUFFERS TERRIBLY FROM FAMINE, AND THE KING THREATENS TO PUT ELISHA TO DEATH. (Not in Chronicles.)

24. *Ben-hadad*] Probably the same king who was defeated and submitted himself to Ahab (1 Kings xx.).

Syria gathered all his host, and went up, and besieged
25 Samaria. And there was a great famine in Samaria: and
behold, they besieged it, until an ass's head was *sold* for
fourscore *pieces* of silver, and the fourth part of a kab
26 of dove's dung for five *pieces* of silver. And as the king of
Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman
27 unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said,
If the LORD do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?

went up, and besieged Samaria] Josephus explains that Jehoram did not feel himself a match for Benhadad, and so shut himself up in Samaria, relying for protection on the security of its walls.

25. *a great famine in Samaria*] The walls were protection enough, but the enemy lay outside, and the provisions came to an end.

an ass's head] This would not, except in dire extremity, be taken for food, but they were in such straits in Samaria that 80 shekels of silver were now given for it.

a kab] So R.V. The measure is not mentioned elsewhere, but is said to have been the sixth part of a *seah*, which is more frequently spoken of. The kab probably contained about two quarts.

dove's dung] Supposed by some to be the name of a very worthless kind of pulse, which in ordinary times nobody dreamt of eating, but of which now a small quantity fetched a large price. That excrement has been used for food in times of famine we have examples (Joseph. *B. J.* v. 13. 7), but that dove's dung should have been specially gathered for this purpose would be very strange. There could be but so small a supply. It appears better therefore to take the words as the name of some vegetable. The Germans call 'assafœtida' *Teufelsdreck*=devil's dung. Josephus says, without any warrant, that this 'dove's dung was bought by the people instead of salt'.

26. *the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall*] Making the necessary rounds to see that the watch was kept up, and everything done that could be done for the security of the city. Josephus says he was afraid lest some one should let in the enemy. The wall must have been furnished with a breast-work so that the inhabitants could pass along without being in much danger, and it would be open on the inner side. Hence any one within could see and speak to those who were passing along, as this woman did. In some cases dwelling-houses were built into the wall, and must have had a passage through them.

27. If *the Lord do not help thee*] There is some difficulty here. The word rendered 'if.....not' is that which in Hebrew is generally put with an imperative=Let not'. So that the sense would be 'May the Lord not help thee'. So the LXX. But such a wish could hardly have come at such a time into the king's mind. The R.V. (marg.) attempts to keep the imperative force thus, 'Nay, let the Lord help thee'. This comes a little nearer the sense of the English versions. But there is no warrant for separating the negative particle in this way from its verb.

out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress? And the 28
king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered,
This woman said unto me, Give thy son, that we may eat
him to day, and we will eat my son to morrow. So we 29
boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her on the
next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath
hid her son. And it came to pass, when the king heard 30
the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes; and he
passed by upon the wall, and the people looked, and
behold, *he had* sackcloth within upon his flesh. Then he 31
said, God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha
the son of Shaphat shall stand on him *this* day.

Perhaps it is best to explain the negative particle, as if the verb belonging to it were suppressed. Thus 'Do not (cry to me); the Lord must help thee; for I cannot'. In this way the sense given in the English versions would be the correct force of the words.

out of the barnfloor, or out of the winepress?] i.e. with anything to eat or to drink. The supply of both was utterly spent, as the whole city knew. For the expression cf. Hos. ix. 2.

28. *What aileth thee?*] The woman's cry is not stopped by his answer. She has more to speak about than to ask him for food.

This woman said unto me] It would appear as if she had brought her neighbour along with her, that what she deemed justice might be done her at once. That they should be brought to such hardships and horrors as are here described had been foretold to Israel in early times (Lev. xxvi. 29; Deut. xxviii. 53—57); cf. also Lament. ii. 20; iv. 10; Ezek. v. 10. Josephus relates the like dreadful sufferings in the siege of Jerusalem by Titus (*B. J.* VI. 3. 4).

my son] According to the history the children were both sons. Josephus represents only one of them as a boy.

29. *she hath hid her son*] So hath famine changed the nature of those whom Jeremiah calls 'the pitiful women'. The king cannot answer such an appeal, though starvation have made the mother feel that it is a just one.

30. *and he passed by upon the wall*] The R.V. places these words in a parenthesis rendering (Now he was passing by upon the wall).

the people looked] At such an appeal many would congregate beside the two persons concerned in the matter.

he had *sackcloth within upon his flesh*] Cf. the action of his father Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 27) when God threatened him with punishment after the murder of Naboth. But neither in one case nor the other does the sorrow appear to have worked any good result. 'I find his sorrow, I find not his repentance. The worst man may grieve for his smart, only the good heart grieves for his offence' (Bp Hall). The result of Jehoram's anguish seems to have been only rage against Elisha.

31. *if the head of Elisha.....shall stand on him* this *day*] We must

32 But Elisha sat in his house, and the elders sat with him; and *the king* sent a man from before him: but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, See ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head? look, when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door: *is* not the sound of his master's feet
33 behind him? And while he yet talked with them, behold,

suppose that Elisha had not been wanting in admonitions to both king and people during this terrible siege, and the anger of Jehoram was great because the prophet, who had wrought so mightily in the war with Moab, and on many another occasion which the king would know of, had done nothing to save the nation in this great calamity. This is the explanation of Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4. 4) and the feeling is what was to be expected in a son of Jezebel.

CHS. VI. 32 VII. 2. A MESSENGER IS SENT TO PUT ELISHA TO DEATH. ELISHA FORETELLS A SUDDEN PLENTY IN SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

32. *But Elisha sat in his house*] His counsels had been productive of little result, but he is less disturbed than others, having a ground for his trust which they had not found.

and the elders sat with him] These must be understood to be the chief men of the city, who had come for his advice, having no other helper to flee unto.

and the king *sent a man*] One of those who were in waiting to obey his orders and who had heard his threat against Elisha.

he said to the elders] i.e. Elisha, divinely forwarned of the impending danger, explains to his companions what the king's design against him was.

this son of a murderer] 'Still is Naboth's blood laid in Jehoram's dish' (Bp Hall). The prophet speaks as though the messenger were already in sight, so vivid is his own spiritual consciousness of what the king has set afoot.

hold him fast at the door] R.V. **hold the door fast against him.** The literal rendering is given on the margin of R.V., 'Thrust him back with the door'. The doors in Oriental houses mostly opened outwards, so that if pushed from within they would come against any one that stood on the outside, and drive him backwards. Beside knowing of the king's threat, Elisha seems to have been aware that he had almost immediately changed his purpose, and was hurrying after the messenger to prevent his order from being executed. Hence he explains to the elders that the king's footsteps are to be heard close upon those of his servant. When they supposed, as they would from the fulfilment of the first part of his words, that Elisha knew exactly what was coming, they would be ready, although they were Jehoram's servants, to stop the messenger so long as to see whether the king did really arrive. That the king did come we learn from vii. 17.

the messenger came down unto him: and he said, Behold, this evil *is* of the LORD; what should I wait for the LORD any longer? Then Elisha said, Hear ye the word of the 7
LORD; Thus saith the LORD, To morrow about *this* time *shall* a measure of fine flour *be sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria. Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the 2
man of God, and said, Behold, *if* the LORD would make

33. *while he yet talked with them*] He had hardly explained his knowledge and his wish before action became necessary. The messenger arrived, and we must understand that the king also arrived immediately afterwards, and so the execution of Elisha was stayed, and Jehoram was shewn to be in some degree penitent for his hasty threat.

and he said] The words which follow must be the words of the king. He has reached Elisha's house and countermanded his first order. Now his thought is of what shall be done next. The people are at the direst extremity, and God, who has allowed this evil to come upon the nation, gives His prophet no message of relief. In this conviction he is of the mind that Samaria shall be surrendered. Hence his language, 'This evil is of the Lord' and He allows it to continue, 'why should I wait for the Lord any longer?'

CH. VII. **1.** *Hear ye the word of the Lord*] Having seen the change in the king's disposition, even though it were a change to despondency, rather than trust, Elisha in the name of the Lord gives a solemn assurance that help is nigh. This he does in the presence of the elders who had been sitting with him, and of those persons who had come in the king's retinue.

a measure of fine flour be sold *for a shekel*] The measure is the Hebrew *seah*, which is said to be about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pecks. It was six times as much as the *Kab* mentioned in vi. 25. So that the change which Elisha foretells would provide 24 times as much good food for one-fifth of the price for which, in the famine, the vilest had been sold.

in the gate of Samaria] Where people congregated for markets and other purposes.

2. *Then a lord*] R.V. **the captain.** This is the usual rendering except in this narrative. The same change is made by R.V. in verses 17 and 19. The word is originally the title of some military officer. Hence the greater fitness of 'captain'.

on whose hand the king leaned] For the expression cf. v. 18, where Naaman describes himself as attending in this capacity. By taking the hand of any one as they walked by their side royal persons shewed their friendship and confidence.

Behold, if *the Lord would* [R.V. **should**] *make windows in heaven*] There is no mark of the hypothesis in the Hebrew, as is shewn by the italic 'if' of A.V. But the sense is hypothetical. Literally the words are 'Behold the Lord [is] making &c.' This is said in derision. Almost as if the captain had said, 'I suppose then the Lord is going to make

windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof.

3 And there were four leprous men *at* the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here
4 until we die? If we say, We will enter *into* the city, then the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall unto the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall
5 but die. And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians: and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold, *there*

&c.' and then he follows his scorn with a question. 'Even then, could [R.V. **might**] this thing be?' For 'windows of heaven' cf. Gen. vii. 11.

thou shalt see it *with thine eyes*] The answer to this mocking captain would be as hard for him to comprehend as was the promise of abundance which he was deriding. He, a person in close attendance on the king, to see the store which was promised and not partake of it was inconceivable. Doubtless his mockery grew louder still.

3—11. FOUR LEPERS DISCOVER THAT THE SYRIAN CAMP IS DESERTED, AND BRING WORD UNTO THE CITY. (Not in Chronicles.)

3. at *the entering in of the gate*] Lepers were not allowed to come into the city even in the time of war. On this regulation concerning them see Lev. xiii. 46; Num. v. 2—3.

until we die] As long as there had been enough, these lepers had their supply from friends in the city, but that had now come to an end. In such a dreadful famine the needs of the outcast lepers could be little regarded.

4. *let us fall unto the host of the Syrians*] These wrecks of humanity use the language which would be used by hale men who were *deserting* one side for another. Cf. 1 Sam. xxix. 3; 2 Kings xxv. 11. The expression 'fall away' for 'desert' is common in English also. Cf. Shaks. *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV. 6. 17, 'Canidius and the rest that *fell away*'.

we shall but die] Josephus makes them say they will be well rid of their lives, εὐθανατήσουτες.

5. *in the twilight*] This must be evening twilight. For in verse 9 they blame themselves for tarrying until morning light, and it was in the night (verse 12) that Jehoram was roused by the news that the Syrian camp was vacated.

to the uttermost [R.V. **outermost**] *part of the camp of Syria*] R.V. **the Syrians**. The portion meant is that which was nearest to them, but 'uttermost' has lost that sense now, and would be taken to signify the 'farthest portion'. Hence the change here and in verse 8. The Hebrew word for Syria is *Aram*, which is used alike for the country

was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the 6
Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses,
even the noise of a great host: and they said one to
another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the
kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to

and the people; and since it is rendered 'Syrians' in the first clause of this verse, and in other places of the chapter, there is no need why it should be otherwise translated here.

6. *For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise*] As the eyes of the Syrians who came to seize Elisha were deluded, and deceived, so here the other sense is made to err. We need not enquire how it was brought about, for we are not told, nor intended to know. The report of what had alarmed the host would come to the knowledge of the Israelites in time, and they could only say, 'It is the Lord's doing, and is marvellous in our eyes'.

hath hired against us] Instances of such mercenary service are found elsewhere in the Bible narrative. Thus (2 Sam. x. 6) 'the children of Ammon sent and *hired* the Syrians of Beth-rehob &c.' And Amaziah, king of Judah, *hired* valiant men out of Israel (2 Chron. xxv. 6).

the kings of the Hittites] In the Bible we first meet with the Hittites as one among several nations whose land God promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen. xv. 20). Next they are mentioned as dwelling near Hebron (Gen. xxiii. 4), and from them Abraham buys a burial-place for Sarah, which is afterwards spoken of (Gen. xxv. 9) as in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar *the Hittite*. Two of Esau's wives were of this people (Gen. xxvi. 34), and their name occurs several times in the story of the captivity, among the people whose land Israel was to go up and possess (Exod. iii. 8, 17; xiii. 5 &c.). In Numb. xiii. 29 the spies when they came back mentioned the Hittites as some of the dwellers in the country, and in Josh. i. 4, the whole country which the people were to go in and possess is described as 'from the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites'. The Hittites are among the enemy whom Israel overcame at the taking of Jericho (Josh. xxiv. 11), and they are part of the host conquered at the waters of Merom (Josh. xi. 4). Some of them continued to dwell in the land in the days of the Judges (Judges iii. 5) and intermingled with the children of Israel. Uriah the Hittite was among David's captains (2 Sam. xxiii. 39), and Hittite women were among the wives of Solomon (1 Kings xi. 1). For the kings of the Hittites, Solomon (1 Kings x. 29) brought horses out of Egypt, and in the present chapter we have the same kings represented as a cause of great alarm to the Syrian host around Samaria. Yet in profane literature this people, evidently very wide-extended and powerful, are unmentioned, and it is only the modern deciphering of the records of Egypt and Babylon which has given us a conception of the Hittite power. Thence we learn that from very early times they were in conflict with Egypt, and that one of their chief towns, Kadesh on the river Orontes, was the scene of several contests between the Hittites and the Egyptians. Their other

7 come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight, and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, *even* the camp as it *was*, and fled for their life.
8 And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent, and did eat and drink, and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid *it;* and came again, and entered into another tent,
9 and carried thence *also*, and went and hid *it*. Then they said one to another, We do not well: this day *is* a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, *some* mischief will come upon us: now therefore come,
10 that we may go and tell the king's household. So they came

chief city is found to have been Carchemish on the Euphrates, so that the description of their territory in Josh. i. 4 is seen to be utterly correct, and we can understand how the hiring of such a mighty enemy would be sure to alarm Benhadad. For particulars of the inscriptions which relate to the Hittites see *Records of the Past* I. 161; II. 61; V. 6, &c. and Dr Wright's *Empire of the Hittites*.

and the kings of the Egyptians] Large districts of Egypt, called by Greeks, Nomes, were under distinct organization though owning allegiance to the Pharaoh. It is very probable that at various periods there were two if not three kingdoms in the land. Hence the Assyrians speak of the *kings* that had been hired out of Egypt. If this had been the case then Ben-hadad and his army would have been shut in both on the north and on the south. We need not wonder at the terror such a thought inspired. The plural 'kings' of the Egyptians may perhaps here be used vaguely, as 'princes' of Babylon is in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31, when only Berodach-baladan is in question.

8. *they went into one tent, and did eat and drink*] Hunger asserted the first claim; that satisfied, they began to think how they might make most gain for themselves, by hiding a store of the deserted wealth; and this they did till their consciences smote them for their selfishness.

9. *We do not well*] Although by the law of Moses these lepers were excluded from the city, they yet had in their degree the duties of citizens to perform, and in neglecting to give tidings of the Syrian flight, they were not acting the citizen's part.

some *mischief will come upon us*] R.V. **punishment will overtake us**. On the margin of R.V. is 'our iniquity will find us out'. The noun is the same which in Gen. iv. 13 is rendered in A.V. in the text by 'punishment' and on the margin by 'iniquity'. The idea of penalty is, and ought to be, closely bound up with the thought of wrong-doing. It could hardly fail to be found out in the morning at what time the lepers had made their discovery, and when it became known they would surely be punished for not giving immediate information.

the king's household] The men themselves would go no further than the gate, but the warders on the wall would carry the news, as soon as

and called unto the porter of the city: and they told them, saying, We came to the camp of the Syrians, and behold, *there was* no man there, neither voice of man, but horses tied, and asses tied, and the tents as they *were*. And he called 11
the porters; and they told *it to* the king's house within.

And the king arose in the night, and said unto his 12
servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *be* hungry; therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field, saying, When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city. And one of his servants 13

they received it, to the royal palace. The king's distress at the sufferings of the besieged citizens would be known to every one.

10. *called unto the porter*] i.e. from the outside of the wall, whither alone they were allowed to come. The singular noun is clearly taken in a collective sense, and some of the versions give 'porters'. The plural pronoun immediately following shews that this is intended. Hence R.V. gives the plural on the margin.

but horses [R.V. the horses] *tied, and asses* [R.V. the asses] *tied*] The articles are expressed in the original, and the strict rendering gives a truer idea of all things being left without distinction. The baggage cattle, and the beasts for riding stood tethered in their places, fear having permitted no attempt to unloose them. In the camp it was necessary to keep the animals tied up, and most likely one part of the encampment was set apart for this purpose, and the terrified soldiers fled without a thought of going first to get their horses.

the tents as they were] The italic word is really implied, and so is printed in Roman type in R.V. Everything had been forsaken just as it stood. The alarm had proved so sudden and so terrible that the one thought had been to get away.

11. *And he called*] i.e. the one who was nearest and received the news did so. The singular corresponds to the singular 'porter' in verse 10. But there is a various reading here in the Hebrew, which the R.V. places on the margin, 'the porters called'.

and they told it to *the king's house* [R.V. household] *within*] The R.V. renders as in verse 9. We are to understand that one of the number of the watchmen was detached to convey the news. They would not all leave their posts.

12—16. THE REPORT OF THE SYRIAN FLIGHT FOUND TO BE TRUE. THE CONSEQUENT PLENTY IN SAMARIA. (Not in Chronicles.)

12. *the king arose in the night*] The news was so important that though it was night-time, the messengers went with it to the king's bedchamber, and he, though probably thinking the report much too good to be true, at once arose to take measures for investigating it.

what the Syrians have done to us] i.e. with the hope of entrapping us.

answered and said, Let *some* take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city, (behold, they *are* as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it: behold, *I say*, they *are even* as all the multitude of the Israelites
14 that are consumed:) and let us send and see. They took therefore two chariot horses; and the king sent after the
15 host of the Syrians, saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and lo, all the way *was* full *of* garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste. And the messengers returned, and told the
16 king. And the people went out, and spoiled the tents of the Syrians. So a measure of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD.

13. *five of the horses*] 'Five' is probably used indefinitely to mean some small number. That 'five' may be thus used seems likely from Gen. xliii. 34; Num. xi. 19.

behold, they are *as all the multitude*] The sense of the speaker seems to be: the men sent out as spies, if they be taken and slain, will be no worse off than those that remain behind, for these are consumed with famine and will soon be dead. And if they find the news true they are enough to make sure of the matter, and to bring word into the city.

14. *two chariot horses*] R.V. **two chariots with horses.** Each chariot had its pair of horses, so that there were four horses, and probably two or three people in each chariot. If anything happened to one chariot, the other might come to the rescue, or, at all events, have a chance of escaping to the city.

after the host of the Syrians] The spies were not content with searching the camp. For the king's misgivings had no doubt communicated themselves to the messengers. So they went on the way where scattered property of all kinds shewed that the Syrians had taken their flight.

15. *unto Jordan*] When the heaven-sent noise caused the Syrians to imagine that the Hittites from the north and the Egyptians from the south were upon them, the only safe road would be to make for the Jordan eastward and, after crossing it, to conceal themselves in the mountains on the other side.

the messengers returned] After the Jordan had been reached there could be no more doubt, there was now no fear of an enemy in ambush.

16. *the people went out*] When the camp had been found empty, word was at once sent back into Samaria, while a portion of the exploring party advanced on the road to the Jordan. The whole population were encouraged by the news, and went out, as they were likely to do after being so long pent up, in full numbers. There was food to be had, and beside that, rich plunder.

according to the word of the Lord] See above in verse 1 where Elisha describes the announcement he makes as 'the word of the Lord'.

And the king appointed the lord on whose hand he 17
leaned to have the charge of the gate: and the people
trode upon him in the gate, and he died, as the man
of God had said, who spake when the king came down
to him. And it came to pass as the man of God had 18
spoken to the king, saying, Two measures of barley for
a shekel, and a measure of fine flour for a shekel, shall
be to morrow about *this* time in the gate of Samaria:
and *that* lord answered the man of God, and said, Now 19
behold, *if* the LORD should make windows in heaven,
might such a thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt
see *it* with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. And so it 20
fell out unto him: for the people trode upon him in the
gate, and he died.

Then spake Elisha unto the woman, whose son he had 8

17—20. THE UNBELIEVING CAPTAIN IS TRODDEN TO DEATH IN THE GATE. (Not in Chronicles.)

17. *the king appointed the lord*] R.V. **captain.** For the change cf. verse 2. The captain was told off to restrain the impetuosity of the crowd, where crowding would be most dangerous.

as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him] These words help us to understand the somewhat broken connexion of the language in verses 32 and 33 of the last chapter. Jehoram himself came down to Elisha's house after he had sent his messenger. Hence Elisha says 'Is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?' (the messenger). And we can then understand the question in the following verse, which is intelligible in the mouth of the king, but could hardly have been spoken by the messenger.

20. *the people trode upon him*] The excitement was no doubt intense. The crowd had been in the camp, had eaten and drunk abundantly, and were carrying home spoils, and probably thinking how soon they could return for another load. There would be but little consideration given to the captain at the gate. The excited mob had lost respect for greatness, and so he is borne down in the throng, and killed, having seen the plenty, but had no share of it.

CH. VIII. 1—6. THE LAND OF THE SHUNAMMITE IS RESTORED TO HER BY THE KING'S ORDER FOR THE SAKE OF ELISHA'S MIRACLES. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *Then spake Elisha*] R.V. **Now Elisha had spoken.** It is clear from verse 3 that Elisha's advice was given at least seven years before the event narrated in these verses. Hence the necessity for the change of tense. It is probable that the accounts of Elisha's work and influence are not related in their chronological order. The famine here

restored to life, saying, Arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn: for the LORD hath called for a famine; and it shall also come
2 upon the land seven years. And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God: and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines
3 seven years. And it came to pass at the seven years' end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines: and she went forth to cry unto the king for
4 her house and for her land. And the king talked with

spoken of was most likely the same to which allusion is made in iv. 38, and perhaps the conference of the king with Gehazi mentioned in verse 4 took place before the latter was smitten with leprosy. It is not however absolutely certain that Jehoram might not have an interview with Gehazi, though leprous. Bp Hall says of them: 'I begin to think some goodness in both these. Had there not been some goodness in Jehoram, he had not taken pleasure to hear, even from a leprous mouth, the miraculous acts and praises of God's prophet: had there not been some goodness in Gehazi, he had not, after so fearful an infliction of judgement, thus ingenuously recounted the praises of his severe master'.

the woman, whose son he had restored] i.e. the Shunammite whose story is told in iv. 8—37.

sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn] Why such advice should be given to a woman, who from the history appears to have been in better circumstances than others, it is not easy to decide. As the husband is nowhere mentioned in this appeal to Jehoram, it may be that he, being already old when the son was restored to life, had in the meantime died. Then she may have fallen into some distress, and have been unable to dwell on the lands which her husband had cultivated.

the Lord hath called for a famine] Similarly the Lord is said *to call for* the sword against a land, Jer. xxv. 29; Ezek. xxxviii. 21.

and it shall also come] Elisha, as the seer, foretells the duration of the dearth, as he had done the termination of the siege, and the consequent abundance in Samaria (vii. 1). In both cases his words are directly referred to Jehovah.

2. *sojourned in the land of the Philistines*] As in Jacob's time, the patriarch with his family was sent into Egypt, an idolatrous land, because of the famine, so the pious Shunammite, for her life's support, goes forth among the Philistines, and stays there seven years.

3. *she went forth to cry unto the king*] She had reached Shunem, and found her land in other hands. It may be that some encroaching neighbour had entered on the untenanted property, or it may have been seized for the king as being deserted of its owner. In either case the king is the person to be appealed to, and to the court she makes her way.

4. *the king talked* [R.V. **was talking**] *with Gehazi*] For a brief

Gehazi the servant of the man of God, saying, Tell me, I pray thee, all the great *things* that Elisha hath done. And it came to pass, *as* he was telling the king how he had 5
restored a dead *body* to life, that behold, the woman, whose son he had restored to life, cried to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son, whom Elisha restored to life. And when the king asked the woman, she told him. 6
So the king appointed unto her a certain officer, saying, Restore all that *was* hers, and all the fruits of the field since the day that she left the land, even until now.

And Elisha came *to* Damascus; and Ben-hadad the king 7

conference we find Naaman coming to the court of Israel and probably obtaining an interview with the king or some of those in immediate attendance on him. So if Jehoram were desirous to know everything about Elisha, he might for a short time converse with Gehazi. The interview appears to have been in some public place, perhaps at the gate of the city, where kings sat to hear appeals and administer justice. The Shunammite finds them together. 'The words of Gehazi, the thoughts of the king, the desires of the Shunammite, all drawn together, by the wise providence of God into the centre of one moment, that His oppressed servant might receive a speedy justice' (Bp Hall).

5. *had restored a dead* body *to life*] R.V. **to life him that was dead.** This would be among the greatest of the great works of Elisha, and Jehoram's interest would consequently be at its height.

6. *she told him*] i.e. confirmed the narrative which Gehazi had given, and at the same time took advantage of the king's interest in Elisha, to press her plea for the restitution of her land.

Restore all that was *hers*] It would seem from this as if the king himself had been put in possession of the land. Hence he could order all the seven years' produce to be given back to her either in kind or in money from the royal stores.

7—15. ELISHA VISITS DAMASCUS. BENHADAD, BEING SICK, SENDS HAZAEL TO ENQUIRE OF ELISHA. BENHADAD IS MURDERED BY HAZAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

7. *And Elisha came* to *Damascus*] Probably here 'Damascus' is used not for the city, but for the district. For Hazael (verse 9) has a journey to make to meet the prophet, and is sent from the royal city by the sick king with his enquiry. We need not suppose that Elisha went to fulfil the command which had been given to Elijah (1 Kings xix. 15) to anoint Hazael king over Syria. For he does not anoint him, but merely says 'The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria'. Elisha appears to have been in no peril when he went into Syria, for the sick king's message is of the most peaceable kind, and the presents which Hazael brought with him are an indication of the honour in

of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, The man of
8 God is come hither. And the king said unto Hazael, Take
a present in thine hand, and go, meet the man of God,
and inquire of the LORD by him, saying, Shall I recover of
9 this disease? So Hazael went to meet him, and took a
present with him, even *of* every good thing of Damascus,
forty camels' burden, and came and stood before him, and
said, Thy son Ben-hadad king of Syria hath sent me to
10 thee, saying, Shall I recover of this disease? And Elisha

which the prophet was held. This may be accounted for by the cure of Naaman, and by the release of the Syrian soldiers whom the prophet had brought into Samaria (vi. 22, 23).

The man of God is come hither] Benhadad had experienced in many ways the power of the God of Israel, and though Rimmon was the god of Damascus, yet, in common with other idolaters, the king thinks that it may be possible for him, through the prophet, to obtain help from the Israelites' God. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 4. 6) represents Benhadad as having sickened from despondency after his late flight from Samaria, and because the God of Israel was hostile to him.

8. *the king said unto Hazael*] Josephus says Hazael was the most trusted of Benhadad's household. He was evidently one of his chief ministers, and must have been in some prominent position at the time when God's message came to Elijah to anoint him as future king.

in thine hand] The Hebrew expression for 'with thee'. So in the next verse the literal 'in his hand' (see margin) is rendered 'with him'. The Oriental notion of sending a present is to make it seem as grand as possible, by committing each portion to a separate servant, or placing it on a separate beast of burden.

inquire of the Lord] It was not for information only that Benhadad sent, but with the hope that for such a gorgeous present the prophet might intercede with the God of Israel for his recovery.

9. *even* of *every good thing of Damascus*] Cf. the present which Jacob sent by his sons when they were going down into Egypt to buy food (Gen. xliii. 11), 'Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels, and carry down the man a present &c.'

forty camels' burden] The number of camels was for display. We are not to suppose that each was fully laden. Nor need we think that Elisha who had refused Naaman's present would be more ready to accept Benhadad's.

stood before him] It must have been well known where Elisha was to be found. There was no concealment in his visit. An array of forty camels would only be brought to a definite spot.

Thy son Ben-hadad] The term indicates the humility of the petitioner. So Ahaz (2 Kings xvi. 7) when he sent for help to Tiglath-pileser, said 'I am thy servant and *thy son*'. In like manner Jehoram called Elisha 'my father', above in vi. 21.

said unto him, Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover: howbeit the LORD hath shewed me that he shall surely die. And he settled his countenance stedfastly, 11
until *he* was ashamed: and the man of God wept. And 12
Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord? And he answered, Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their young *men* wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. And 13

10. *Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly* [R.V. **shalt surely**] *recover*] This is not the translation of the Hebrew text (*Kethib*) but of the marginal reading [*Keri*]. The variation is between לֹא the negative and לוֹ the pronoun and preposition. The text would be rendered 'Go say; Thou shalt *not* recover'. This does not suit with what follows, 'Howbeit the Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die'. We should expect 'For the Lord &c.' The meaning of the prophet's words is, 'Go and carry him such a message as a courtier is likely to carry, a message of good promise, for this I know you are likely to do, yet the Lord has made known to me that he will die'. The R.V. has given the translation of the *Kethib* on the margin, but as that is so little in harmony with the context, has translated the *Keri* in the text, though this is contrary to the usual rule of the Revisers.

Another way of explaining the language of Elisha has been adopted by some. It is pointed out that the king's question was 'Shall I recover of this disease?' Elisha, forewarned of the events that were coming, gives as answer to that enquiry 'Thou shalt surely recover', meaning thereby that the disease would not kill Benhadad, but suppresses that other source whence danger and death threatened, viz., the murderous hands of Hazael, which he knew would soon slay his master. This seems very unlike the manner of a prophet of the Lord. The explanation previously given is therefore to be preferred. Bp Hall takes the later explanation, 'The Lord hath shewed me that he shall surely die, by another means, though not by the disease'.

11. *And he settled his countenance stedfastly*] The R.V. adds 'upon him' in italics. This no doubt is the sense. Elisha fixed a stedfast gaze on the messenger. 'The seer of God descries more in Hazael than he could see in himself: he fixes his eyes therefore stedfastly in the Syrian's face, as one that in those lines read the bloody story of his life. Hazael blushes, Elisha weeps. The intention (i.e. the stedfast gaze) of those eyes did not so much amaze Hazael as the tears. As yet he was not guilty to himself of any wrong that might strain out this juice of sorrow' (Bp Hall).

until he *was ashamed*] i.e. until Hazael blushed with embarrassment at the searching look.

12. *and wilt dash their children*] R.V. **and wilt dash in pieces their little ones**. We have no details of Hazael's cruelty in the future, but

Hazael said, But what, *is* thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing? And Elisha answered, The LORD
14 hath shewed me *that* thou *shalt be* king over Syria. So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master; who said to him, What said Elisha to thee? And he answered, He
15 told me *that* thou shouldest surely recover. And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth, and dipt *it* in water, and spread *it* on his face, so that he died: and Hazael reigned in his stead.

hints of it are found. In x. 32 it is said 'Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel', and in xiii. 3 we read 'the Lord delivered Israel into the hand of Hazael', and in verse 22 of that chapter 'Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz'. The special instances of cruelty mentioned in this verse were those perpetrated among all the Eastern nations of Hazael's time, and examples are to be found in several places in Scripture. Cf. Is. xiii. 15, 16; Hosea x. 14; xiii. 16; Nahum iii. 10.

13. *And Hazael said, But what,* is *thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?*] R.V. **And Hazael said, But what is thy servant, which is but a dog, that he should do this great thing?** Hazael has felt the keenness of the prophet's glance, and finds that his thoughts are known, and his inmost designs laid bare. But still he keeps up a semblance of humility and calls himself a dog, a title of greatest contempt in the eyes of Orientals. Cf. for this use of the word 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; 2 Sam. ix. 8; xvi. 9.

14. *So* [R.V. **Then**] *he departed from Elisha*] The last words of the prophet had shewn him that his whole aim was clear in Elisha's sight, and his character thoroughly read. He had been treated as a man who would give a soft answer whatever the real message might be, and now he is sent away with the knowledge that the Lord sees all his policy. But he was a determined spirit, and the words of the prophet did not act as a check, but set him on a bolder course of villainy. He first acts the part that had been imputed to him, and with a lying tongue says 'He told me thou shouldest surely recover'. After that he cannot wait for time to bring about what God had said would be, but by a short road comes to the throne after smothering his master.

15. *on the morrow*] He would not tarry. The means he employed was probably the coverlet of the bed, which, soaked and laid over the sick man's face, would effectually stop his breath. The noun rendered 'thick cloth' [R.V. **the coverlet**] is only found here, but it is connected with a verb which signifies 'to weave'. Hence it was some woven stuff. 'Coverlet' is the rendering sanctioned by the LXX. which has τὸ στρῶμα. Death so caused would give very little sign of violence, and might in those early times be readily referred to the disease of which the king was sick. The Targum interprets the word of the mosquito-curtains round the bed, but these would be unsuitable for such

And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of 16
Israel, Jehoshaphat *being* then king of Judah, Jehoram the
son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah *began* to reign. Thirty 17
and two years old was he when he *began* to reign; and he
reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the 18
way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab: for
the daughter of Ahab was his wife: and he did evil in the
sight of the LORD. Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah 19
for David his servant's sake, as he promised him to give to

a purpose. Josephus explains it of some network (*δίκτυον*) with which he says Hazael strangled his master. This also is not the notion of the text.

16—24. JEHORAM, THE SON OF JEHOSHAPHAT KING OF JUDAH. HIS WARS WITH EDOM AND LIBNAH. (2 Chron. xxi. 1—20.)

16. *In the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab*] On the difficulties connected with the chronology of this period, see above on i. 17. On the strength of the words in this verse 'Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah' it is supposed that Jehoram king of Judah was co-regent with his father. But, as is noted on the margin of R.V., some ancient authorities omit the sentence which makes father and son to be reigning together. The chief difficulty is introduced by the words of i. 17, which make Joram the son of Ahab commence his reign in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat of Judah. That statement contradicts the present verse, and the explanation given on i. 17 though generally accepted gives rise to many questions. Especially it is objected that in no other instance is a son found reigning along with his father. Then Jehoshaphat was a vigorous monarch and zealous for the service of Jehovah, and was not likely to take as his coadjutor a prince of so weak a character, and of such different religious feeling as Jehoram. Still no more satisfactory solution has been suggested.

17. *when he* began *to reign*] The narrative of the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxi. 2—4) tells how at the commencement of his reign Jehoram slew his seven brothers as well as some of the princes of Israel. Thus he proved himself of a like character with Athaliah, whom he married.

18. *as did the house of Ahab*] Jehoshaphat's friendship and alliance with Ahab's house brought the ways of Israel into the kingdom of Judah.

the daughter of Ahab] i.e. Athaliah, who, after the death of Ahaziah (2 Kings xi. 1), slew all the seed royal of Judah, with the exception of Joash, Ahaziah's son, whom his aunt Jehosheba rescued.

19. *Yet* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the Lord would not destroy*] The R.V. has adopted the rendering of Chronicles, where the original is the same as here.

as he promised him to give him alway a light, and *to his children*] R.V. **as he promised him to give unto him a lamp for his children**

20 him alway a light, *and* to his children. In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah, and made a king
21 over themselves. So Joram went over to Zair, and all the chariots with him: and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about, and the captains of
22 the chariots: and the people fled into their tents. Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day.

alway. The italic 'and' in A.V. shews that there is no conjunction in the Hebrew. Hence the change in R.V. But in 2 Chron. xxi. 7 the 'and' is expressed, and probably should be here. In 2 Sam. xxi. 17 David is called 'the lamp of Israel'. For the promise to David and his seed see 2 Sam. vii. 12—16, and for the expression 'to give him a lamp' see 1 Kings xi. 36, xv. 4, in which last passage the A.V. renders the noun 'lamp', which for consistency the R.V. has adopted in all the parallel places.

20. *Edom revolted*] In Solomon's time, Hadad (1 Kings xi. 14) recovered the kingdom of Edom, which had been overthrown by David (2 Sam. viii. 14). But by the time of Jehoshaphat the Edomites were again subject to Judah (1 Kings xxii. 47) and appear to have continued so until the time of the revolution here mentioned.

made a king over themselves] i.e. They deposed the deputy of Judah, and made one of their own royal family king, or chose a king of their own.

21. *So Joram went* [R.V. **Then Joram passed**] *over to Zair*] The name Zair is only found here. In the parallel passage of 2 Chronicles xxi. we find 'with his princes' instead of 'to Zair', and as there is some similarity of sound between the two Hebrew forms, it has been thought by some that there is a mistake in Kings from some misreading of the scribe. Others have suggested that 'Zair' is for 'Zoar', through which place troops marching from Judæa into Edom would have to pass. Others with much more probability have taken Zair (צָעִיר) to be a mis-writing for Seir (שֵׂעִיר), the name of the mountain ridge which extends southward from the Dead Sea through the desert. It is true 'Seir' is not named elsewhere by the writer of Kings, but there seems to be no occasion where he might be expected to mention it.

and he rose [R.V. inserts **up**] *by night and smote the Edomites which compassed him about*] Joram appears to have been surrounded by the Edomite forces, and for some time to have had the worst of the contest. It was only by a sudden sally in the night time that he forced his way out, and escaped. The captains of the Edomite chariots, mentioned here, most likely formed the outer circle of the enclosing force, and through them Joram passed last.

and the people fled into [R.V. **to**] *their tents*] 'The people' are the army of Joram, which after escaping from their encircling enemy made the best of their way home, feeling that Edom was too strong for them.

22. *Yet* [R.V. **so**] *Edom revolted*] The conjunction is changed to conform to the rendering in 2 Chronicles xxi. As the army of Joram was

Then Libnah revolted at the same time. And the rest of 23
the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written
in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And 24
Joram slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers
in the city of David: and Ahaziah his son reigned in his
stead.

In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of 25
Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah *begin*
to reign. Two and twenty years old *was* Ahaziah when he 26

defeated, the Edomites secured their independence, and that continued till the date of the record from which the compiler of the Kings drew his information. So he copies faithfully 'unto this day'.

Then Libnah revolted] R.V. **did Libnah revolt.** The change is in conformity with Chronicles, because of the similarity of the Hebrew. Libnah was situate in the lowland between the mountains of Judah and the Mediterranean coast. It was a strong city with a king when the Israelites took it under Joshua (Josh. x. 29—39). It is mentioned afterwards (2 Kings xix. 8) as besieged by Sennacherib. The narrative of the Chronicler adds as the reason of the revolt 'because he [Joram] had forsaken the Lord the God of his fathers'. The revolt of Libnah does not seem to be connected in any way with that of Edom. The time was opportune and both Edomites and Libnites availed themselves of it.

23. *the rest of the acts of Joram*] In Chronicles we are told of the high places which he made in the mountains of Judah, and how he compelled the people to worship there. In consequence of this a writing is said to have come to him from Elijah the prophet rebuking him for his evil doing, and telling of the painful disease by which he should die. We read there also of revolts against Joram by the Philistines and the Arabians, and that by the latter all the king's family were cut off except his youngest son. Moreover that when he died the people made no burning for him, as had been done at the death of his ancestors, and that 'he departed without being desired', i.e. none missed him or lamented for him when he died. Also that though buried in the city of David, his body was not put into the sepulchres of the kings. This last statement is no contradiction of what is contained in verse 24 of this chapter.

25—29. Reign of Ahaziah king of Judah. His war against Hazael king of Syria. Joram king of Israel helps Ahaziah and is wounded. (2 Chronicles xxii. 1—6.)

25. *Joram...Jehoram*] To prevent confusion it will be convenient to adopt the orthography of this verse for these names, Joram king of Israel, and Jehoram king of Judah. They are but different forms of the same name, and given in the Bible narrative indiscriminately to each.

26. *Two and twenty years old* was *Ahaziah*] In 2 Chron xxii. 2 his

began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king
27 of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as *did* the house of
28 Ahab: for he *was* the son in law of the house of Ahab. And he went with Joram the son of Ahab to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead; and the
29 Syrians wounded Joram. And king Joram went back to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went

age is given as *forty-two*. This cannot be correct, but is due to a misreading of the Hebrew letters which were used as numerals. Jehoram, the father of Ahaziah, was *thirty-two* years old (see verse 17) when he began to reign and he reigned eight years. If Ahaziah was two and twenty at his father's death, he was born when Jehoram was eighteen. This is not uncommon in the East. Indeed we find from 2 Chron. xxii. 1 that Jehoram had other children older than Ahaziah, but they were slain by the Arabian invaders.

Athaliah, the daughter of Omri] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel and so the grand-daughter of Omri. For this manner of speech cf. verse 20 of the next chapter, where Jehu is called the *son* of Nimshi, though he has been twice spoken of in previous verses (2, 14) as the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi.

27. *he walked in the way of the house of Ahab*] The Chronicler adds 'for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly'.

and did evil] R.V. **that which was evil.** The usual change, which will not again be noticed.

28. *to the war against Hazael*] Hazael was already beginning to fulfil the forecast of Elisha. Ramoth-gilead belonged to Israel (1 Kings xxii. 3) but now, as in Ahab's reign, it was being seized by the Syrians. Joram, Ahab's son, had ill-fortune like that of his father in the Syrian war, though as is evident from the next chapter he kept possession of Ramoth and left his officers there.

29. *And king Joram went back* [R.V. **returned**] *to be healed in Jezreel*] The verb is changed to conform to the translation in Chronicles. Jezreel was one of the capital cities of the northern kingdom, where was a royal palace, and where all attendance could be procured.

Ramah] This is put for Ramoth-gilead, both here and in the parallel passage in Chronicles, but nowhere else. Ramah is a singular noun meaning 'high land' and Ramoth is the plural of it, and Ramah is used for the name of two or three other places, one in the tribe of Benjamin and one in the hill country of Ephraim, all no doubt distinguished by their elevated situation. The land of Gilead was all mountainous, and the town of Ramoth was perhaps built on more than one hill though the engagement where Joram was wounded may have taken place on one special height.

THE
KINGDOM
OF
ISRAEL
DAMASCUS
KEDESH
Waters of Merom
Ashteroth Karnaim
GOLAN
Sea of Chinnereth
Mt Carmel
Mt Gilboa
Valley of Jezreel
Valley of Sharon
Mt Lebanon
Anti-Lebanon
Helbon
Zidon
Tyre
Accho
Ashteroth
Bozrah
Beth-anath
Beth-shemesh
Jabesh-gilead
Mahanaim
Aphek
Abila
Argob
Bashan
Zarephath
Ramah
Hazor
Dothan
Shunem
Taanach
Megiddo
Jokneam
Shimron
Japhia
Chisloth
Daberath
Mt Tabor
Ramoth
Jarmuth
Adullam
Hebron
Beth-rehob
Abel-beth-maachah
Ijon
Kedesh-naphtali
Hukkok
Rakkath
Aphek
Gath-hepher
Kattath
Misheal
Zebulun
Rimmon
Beth-arbel
Gilead
Mizpah
Ramoth-gilead
Succoth
Zaphon
Penuel
Tishbe
Ahab's ivory house
Samaria
Tirzah
Shechem
Ebal
Gerizim
Shiloh
Ai
Bethel
Gibeah
Jericho
Gilgal
Ramah
Mizpah
Jabesh
Ophrah
Beth-horon
Ajalon
Gibeon
Zorah
Eshtaol
Timnah
Ekron
Ashdod
Gath
Ashkelon
Gaza
Libnah
Lachish
Eglon
Hebron
Debir
Adullam
Mareshah
Keilah
Ziklag
Beersheba
Arad
Hormah
Ziph
Maon
Carmel
Engedi
Zoar
Sodom
Salt Sea
Jordan
Kishon
Brook of Egypt
Great Sea
Mediterranean Sea
Helbon
Helbah
Ijon
Abel-beth-maachah
Kedesh-naphtali
Hazor
Ramah
Gilead
Ramoth-gilead
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Mareshah
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Ziklag
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Arad
Hormah
Ziph
Maon
Carmel
Engedi
Zoar
Sodom
Salt Sea
Jordan
Kishon
Brook of Egypt
Great Sea
Mediterranean Sea

Joppa
Me-jarkon
Ekron
Gezer
Gibeon
Gilgal
Ophrah
Lebonah
Bethel
Ophrah
Jericho
Almon
Gath
Zelzah
Bethlehem
Etam
Shoshoh
Ramoth-Gilead
Jazer
Rabbath-ammon
Beth-nimrah
Heshbon
Elealeh
Medeba
Beth peor
English Miles.
32°
35°
36°
N

down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the 9
prophets, and said unto him, Gird up thy loins, and take this box of oil in thine hand, and go *to* Ramoth-gilead: and when thou comest thither, look out there Jehu the son 2
of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and make him

Ahaziah...went down to see Joram] After the battle Ahaziah at first returned, probably with his portion of the allied army, to Jerusalem. But the friendship between the two royal houses was so close that he presently went northward to Jezreel to pay a visit to his wounded ally and kinsman. The Chronicler says 'the destruction of Ahaziah was of God by coming to Joram'.

CH. IX. 1—10. ELISHA SENDS ONE OF THE SONS OF THE PROPHETS TO ANOINT JEHU, AND GIVE HIM HIS COMMISSION. (Not in Chronicles.)

And Elisha the prophet called one of the children [R.V. sons] *of the prophets*] 'Children' gives a wrong idea. The prophetic communities were formed of men who came together for worship, and were not necessarily connected in any family relationship, any more than Elisha was connected with Elijah. Elisha had an attendant who served him as he had served his master. Such a one he chooses for his messenger to Jehu.

Gird up thy loins] The moment had come for executing God's vengeance on the house of Ahab, and the work is to be done without delay. Joram's conduct seems to have prepared the feelings of the army for a revolt.

take this box [R.V. vial] *of oil*] 'Vial' is the rendering of this word in A.V. of 1 Sam. x. 1 and is a more appropriate word when used for an oil vessel. It only occurs there and in this chapter. Jehu alone of all the kings of Israel was anointed.

to *Ramoth-gilead*] Here Jehu and his fellow officers had apparently been left in charge, while Joram went away to Jezreel. But from Joram's action, when he finds Jehu approaching Jezreel (verse 21), it is clear that his wound was not of a very serious character. It may be therefore that he had seized the first opportunity of withdrawing from the war to the capital. If so the soldiery would be inclined to favour the generals who remained through the campaign, and to hold the king in contempt. This would explain the ease with which Jehu's attempt succeeded in Ramoth-gilead, and the readiness with which his fellow generals fell in with the movement.

2. *Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi*] Jehu was no doubt well known both in the army and elsewhere, and his afterlife shews that he was a man of action and with very slight scruples. The watchman on the tower in Jezreel knows his manner of riding, and there seems to have been little hesitation on the part of the messengers

arise up from among his brethren, and carry him *to* an inner
3 chamber: then take the box of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and tarry not.
4 So the young man, *even* the young man the prophet, went
5 *to* Ramoth-gilead. And when he came, behold, the captains of the host *were* sitting; and he said, I have an errand to thee, O captain. And Jehu said, Unto which of all us?
6 And he said, To thee, O captain. And he arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the LORD, *even* over

whom Joram sent out about obeying Jehu's order 'Turn thee behind me'

and go in] We see from this that the troops and officers of Israel were within the city, and holding it against the Syrians.

from among his brethren] i. e. His fellow officers, his brothers in arms.

to *an inner chamber*] Literally 'a chamber within a chamber'. See note on 1 Kings xx. 30. The design of this privacy was no doubt that Jehu might be at liberty to take his own measures for carrying out his commission, without the interference of any but comrades of his own choice.

3. *Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee*] 'God who would not countenance (by anointing) the erection of that usurped throne, would countenance the alteration. Or is it that by this visible testimony of divine ordination the courage of the Israelitish captains might be raised up, to second the high and bold attempt of him, whom they saw destined from heaven to rule?' (Bp Hall.)

flee, and tarry not] The suddenness of the messenger's arrival and departure would be sure to produce a deep impression on those who observed him.

5. *the captains of the host* were *sitting*] Perhaps discussing some matter connected with the defence of the city. Jehu is the one who speaks to the new-comer. We may take it that he was the moving spirit in the war-council, and hence had gained a popularity beyond that of king Joram.

6. *went into the house*] The council was sitting in the courtyard, a place which in Eastern houses can be kept somewhat private.

over the people of the Lord, even *over Israel*] Though the northern kingdom had cast aside the true worship of Jehovah, and followed readily in the ways of Jeroboam, yet the abundance of prophetic labour which was expended in Israel exceeds, as far as we learn from the Bible, that which was bestowed on the more faithful Judah. Israel is still the people of the Lord.

Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, 7
that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets,
and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, at the hand
of Jezebel. For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and 8
I will cut off from Ahab *him that* pisseth against the
wall, and *him that is* shut up and left in Israel: and I will 9
make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the
son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of
Ahijah: and the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of 10
Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*. And he open-
ed the door, and fled.

7. *thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master*] The punishment of Ahab had been postponed because of his repentance (1 Kings xxi. 29) but the sins of the father, which have blossomed and borne evil fruit in his children, will at last be thoroughly punished. The instrument chosen is one who had been in the service of Ahab, and so was aware of the evil that had been wrought by him.

my servants, the prophets] Although Obadiah was able to save a hundred, Jezebel still made havoc of the rest. And it appears from the words that follow that not the prophets only, but all the servants of the Lord, had been the objects of her rage. And she was yet alive and in power. There must have been much zeal for Jehovah to sustain the righteous spirit which manifests itself so frequently in the history of Elijah and Elisha.

at the hand of Jezebel] i.e. God will require from her and her family the penalty for all the evil that has been wrought.

8. On this verse see the notes on 1 Kings xiv. 10. The entire family is doomed. God will cut off from Ahab **every man child.** (R.V.)

and him that is *shut up and left in Israel*] R.V. **him that is shut up and him that is left at large in Israel.** The phrase is intended to embrace every one, young or old, bond or free.

9. *like the house of Jeroboam*] Against whom the like prophecy is spoken in 1 Kings xiv. 10, and against Baasha in 1 Kings xvi. 3, 4.

10. *the dogs shall eat Jezebel*] This fate had been foretold by Elijah 1 Kings xxi. 23. The dogs in Eastern cities prowl hungrily about, and act as scavengers. Hence they are in bad repute, and the name 'dog' is one of greatest contempt. To be devoured by them was the extreme of degradation and penalty to an Oriental mind.

in the portion of Jezreel] In 1 Kings xxi. 23 the Hebrew word used signifies 'wall' (R.V. **rampart**) though according to some authorities the word should be the same which is used here. 'By the rampart' indicates that she should lie just where she was thrown down close to the city wall. The 'portion' signifies the ground a little more outlying, which in an Eastern town is used for the deposit of all offal and rubbish.

and there shall be *none to bury* her] One moment she will be queen, the next, cast out of the window by the eunuchs, and her lot so

11 Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord: and
one said unto him, *Is all* well? wherefore came this mad
fellow to thee? And he said unto them, Ye know the man,
12 and his communication. And they said, *It is* false; tell us
now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying,
Thus saith the LORD, I have anointed thee king over Israel.
13 Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and

changed that none shall care to go and see what becomes of her body.

11—26. JEHU IS PROCLAIMED, AND GOES TO JEZREEL. JORAM IS SLAIN, AND HIS BODY CAST INTO THE PORTION OF NABOTH THE JEZREELITE. (Not in Chronicles.)

11. *to the servants of his lord*] i.e. To the other captains with whom he had before been in conference. They were all Joram's officers.

wherefore came this mad fellow *to thee?*] The visit had been made abruptly and in much haste, and amid the camp there would be but little respect for the garb of the prophet. We can see too from the words of the next verse that there was much of bluntness and rudeness in the speech of these soldiers to one another. We need not then suppose that they deemed the prophet a madman, but this is the term they are pleased to apply to him owing to his sudden movements.

Ye know the man] No doubt this applies to the appearance and dress of the prophets which distinguished them from others. It means, 'Ye know to what class the man belongs, and so you can guess at the nature of his communication.' Such a man in such haste comes only with a message 'Thus saith the Lord'. Others have referred the words to what the officers had before said, calling the messenger 'mad'. This would make Jehu's reply mean, 'You call him mad, and of course then his communication must be only a madman's raving.' So R.V., **and what his talk was.**

12. It is *false*] In the bluntest way they make Jehu understand that his answer is a mere subterfuge, and that in spite of having called the prophet a madman, they feel that he has not come without some special errand.

Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee] It is worthy of notice how constantly the people of the northern kingdom, though it was given up to calf-worship, and Baal-worship, yet attach the highest importance to the messages of God's prophets, and act upon them without demur. Jehu and his companions, being about the court of Ahab, Ahaziah and Joram, no doubt joined in the idolatry and excesses of the time. But at the voice of the prophet they are prepared to dethrone the house of Ahab and put Jehu in his place.

13. *Then they hasted*] The LXX. gives 'they heard it and hastened'. This action on the part of the generals shews how little they were attached to the house of Ahab.

took every man his garment] The loose Oriental robe which could

put *it* under him on the top of the stairs, and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king. So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because 14

easily be laid aside, and which they probably had laid aside or allowed to fall off during the consultation.

and put it *under him*] They made a seat for Jehu by folding their garments, and piling them together. The expression 'under him' shews what use was made of all the garments. Some have thought that the robes were used as a carpet, and laid all the way up the stairs from the court where they had been in conference. The stairs were outside the building and went from the courtyard up to the roof. Thus Jehu would have walked in state to the place which they chose for the proclamation. But the conspirators were in too great haste for this sort of parade. They extemporised a cushion with their robes, and set Jehu upon them.

on the top of the stairs] There is some difficulty in explaining the word rendered 'top'. Primarily it means 'a bone'. Then something strong and firm. Hence it has been thought to have the sense here of the body of the staircase, and so to signify 'the stairs themselves'. Thus the translation would be merely 'on the stairs'. Others clinging to the sense of 'bone' have translated 'on the bare steps' (R.V. margin). The Vulgate appears to have taken the word as equivalent to 'in the manner of' and translates 'in similitudinem tribunalis'. But without the steps there could be little made by the garments to look like a rostrum or tribune. The LXX. merely transliterates the Hebrew word ἐπὶ τὸ γαρὲμ. The sense 'top' is obtained by considering that the prominent part of the staircase is meant by this expression, and that for the purpose here desired, the best possible place was that where Jehu would be set above the people. The generals must have gathered such a company as they could on a short notice, and when Jehu was seated in the best state they could prepare, have made their proclamation while he sat on the extemporized throne.

blew with trumpets] For this cf. the proclamation of Solomon (1 Kings i. 34).

14. *conspired against Joram*] The verb has the notion of 'binding'. Hence it implies here that Jehu made a league with the other generals to carry out the deposition and slaying of Joram. The word in the form here used is found again 2 Chron. xxiv. 25, 26 of those who combined 'to execute judgement' on Joash king of Judah.

Now Joram had kept [R.V. omits *had*] *Ramoth-gilead*] The reference is to the existing state of the war. The army of Israel was in Ramoth, to protect the place against the threatened invasion of the Syrians.

he and all Israel] Meaning the greater part of the army, all the soldiery which could come into the field. Syria was clearly a most formidable enemy. Hazael was carrying out to the full the predictions of Elisha (viii. 12).

15 of Hazael king of Syria. But king Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him, when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, If it be your minds, *then* let none go forth
16 *nor* escape out of the city to go to tell *it* in Jezreel. So Jehu rode *in a chariot*, and went to Jezreel; for Joram lay there. And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see
17 Joram. And there stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel, and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company. And Joram said, Take a horseman,

15. *But king Joram was returned*] Though he was at Jezreel professedly for the cure of his wounds, Joram was sufficiently recovered to be able to entertain Ahaziah, and also to go forth in his chariot to meet Jehu. If he stayed in his capital thus, while the army was in force at Ramoth-gilead and fully occupied with the Syrian foe, we can easily understand how the feelings of the soldiery would turn from him to the officers who remained with them, and especially to Jehu, who seems to have been the man of action among the number.

If it be your minds] R.V. **If this be your mind.** The LXX. renders 'If your mind be with me', which gives the sense, though there is nothing in the Hebrew to represent 'with me' any more than the 'this' of R.V. Jehu, as was fit until his throne was secure, takes counsel with his fellow-generals.

let none go forth nor *escape*] R.V. **let none escape and go forth.** The literal meaning of the Hebrew is 'let no escaper go forth'. Hence the change in R.V. To secure this must be their care. Jehu himself with a faithful few will start at once to execute the judgement which has been laid upon him. His best chance of success is to take Joram by surprise.

16. *went to Jezreel*] After these words the LXX. has "for Joram king of Israel was being cured in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians gave him in Ramoth in the battle with Hazael king of Syria, for he was a mighty man and man of power".

And Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram] This visit of Ahaziah to Joram and its fatal result is the only portion of the history alluded to by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxii. 7—9). He tells how the visit was ordained by God for Ahaziah's destruction. He gives however some variations in reference to the manner of Ahaziah's death, on which see below, verse 27.

17. *And there stood a watchman*] R.V. **Now the watchman stood.** While such danger was threatening one part of the land, and the army was in the field, the watchman would be kept permanently on the look-out for any messenger that might be seen coming. The tower was probably some lofty part of the royal palace, for the news seems easily to have been conveyed to the king.

and send to meet them, and let him say, *Is it* peace?
So there went one on horseback to meet him, and 18
said, Thus saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu said,
What hast thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me.
And the watchman told, saying, The messenger came
to them, but he cometh not again. Then he sent *out* a 19
second on horseback, which came to them, and said, Thus
saith the king, *Is it* peace? And Jehu answered, What hast
thou to do with peace? turn thee behind me. And the 20
watchman told, saying, He came even unto them, and
cometh not again: and the driving *is* like the driving of
Jehu the son of Nimshi; for he driveth furiously. And 21
Joram said, Make ready. And his chariot was made ready.

Is it *peace?*] There would be much anxiety in the king's mind, though he would not expect what was coming. He might suppose that the army in Ramoth had been defeated, and that the hasty messenger was coming to announce that Ramoth was again in the hand of Syria. So the 'Is all well?' of the margin of R.V. gives an excellent sense, and is the rendering of the same phrase in verse 11, though it does not admit of the reply which Jehu gives in the next verse.

18. *What hast thou to do with peace?*] What concern is it of thine whether I come peaceably or not? My errand is not to thee. Josephus says the messenger's enquiry was about affairs in the camp, for that the king's questions were about them. Jehu bade him not to worry about these things but to follow him (*Ant.* IX. 6. 3). The design of Jehu's order was that no information should be brought to Joram.

20. *the driving* is *like the driving of Jehu*] It is clear from this that Jehu was well known, and the manner in which he would lead forward his men was unmistakeable.

the son of Nimshi] Really 'grandson', see verse 2, and the note on chapter viii. 28.

he driveth furiously] The word rendered 'furiously' is from the same root as that rendered 'mad' in verse 11. This is the sense given by the Greek and Latin versions, but Josephus as if explaining this word says 'Jehu journeyed leisurely and in good order'. The Chaldee and Arabic also explain it by 'quietly'.

21. *Make ready*] Literally as in margin of R.V. 'yoke'. The mention of Jehu has shewn Joram that the reason must be a weighty one which brings the commander of the army from Ramoth at full speed. So he goes to meet him that he may know what has happened. Apparently he set forth without any body guard, and thus is easily put to flight when Jehu attacks him. The two kings went forth in somewhat of a state array. Both had been in the defence of Ramoth-gilead and so were both interested in what they expected would be news from the army.

And Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot, and they went out against Jehu,
22 and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite. And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, *Is it* peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts *are*
23 *so* many? And Joram turned his hands, and fled, and said
24 to Ahaziah, *There is* treachery, O Ahaziah. And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart, and he sunk
25 down in his chariot. Then said *Jehu* to Bidkar his captain, Take up, *and* cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite: for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father, the LORD laid this

went out against Jehu] R.V. **to meet Jehu**. There is not necessarily an adverse sense in the word, and the kings had no suspicion of what Jehu's real errand was. It might be disaster in the army, but rebellion was out of their thoughts.

in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite] This was 'hard by the palace' (1 Kings xxi. 1) so that the royal chariots had not gone far before they came upon Jehu. The spot was no longer 'a vineyard' as when it belonged to Naboth, but had been converted by Ahab and Jezebel to some other purpose.

22. *What peace*] i.e. How can there be any peace, while the evil doings of Jezebel continue as great as before. By 'whoredoms' the Scripture writers continually signify 'the practice of idolatry' and that is probably the sense here. Cf. Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16; Deut. xxxi. 6; Jud. viii. 27; Jer. iii. 6 &c. 'The witchcrafts' probably allude to the incantations and charms employed to obtain responses from the heathen gods. In Is. xlvii. 9, 12, where the word is rendered '*sorceries*', this is clearly the sense, and cf. also Micah v. 12 'I will cut off *witchcraft*', and in Nahum iii. 4 Nineveh is called 'the mistress of *witchcrafts*...that selleth families through her *witchcrafts*'.

23. *Joram turned his hands*] i.e. Wheeled his chariot about to go in a contrary direction. Cf. 1 Kings xxii. 34.

24. *drew a* [R.V. **his**] *bow with his full strength*] Literally as on margin of R. V. 'filled his hand with the bow', which expresses the attitude of a bowman as he shoots.

between his arms] As he was in flight, the arrow passed between his shoulders and so went through the breast. He was mortally wounded and could not be stayed up in his chariot, but died at once. Instead of 'in his chariot' the LXX. renders 'upon his knees, reading the preposition in בִּרְכֵּבוֹ as a part of the root and treating the word as if it had been בִּרְכָּיו.

25. *rode together after Ahab his father*] Jehu had long experience

burden upon him; surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons, saith the LORD; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the LORD. Now therefore take *and* cast him into the plat *of ground*, according to the word of the LORD. 26

But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw *this*, he fled *by* the way of the garden house. And Jehu followed after him, 27

of the doings of Ahab's family, and had not forgotten the prophetic words of Elijah. 'Little did he think when he heard that message that his hands would act it' (Bp Hall). By 'riding together after Ahab' we are not to understand that they were both together in the same chariot or both in Ahab's chariot, but that they were together among the king's retinue, when he went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

laid this burden upon him] Or (as R.V. margin) 'uttered this oracle against him'. The noun is that which is so often used by the prophets, especially Isaiah, for the oracle spoken against any city or nation. Cf. Is. xiii. 1; xv. 1; xvii. 1; xix. 1, &c. Also 2 Chron. xxiv. 27. The verb also is cognate with the noun, and signifies here 'to lift up', i.e. the voice, in the utterance of a prophecy.

26. *the blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons*] It appears from this that Jezebel in order that she might put all claimants out of the way, had caused the family of Naboth to be killed as well as himself. So Ahab's son pays the penalty of his father's wrongdoing, and both father and son are brought at death into the field which they had gained with so much crime, and as Elijah had foretold, dogs lick the blood of both.

saith the Lord] The phrase is not the usual Hebrew, but a more solemn form of expression, used in the prophets and especially in Jeremiah. Cf. Jer. i. 8, 15, 19, &c.

I will requite thee in this plat] Jehu gives the sense but not the words of 1 Kings xxi. 19.

take and *cast him*] i.e. Lift his dead body out of the chariot and carry it and throw it forth into the ground which was taken from Naboth.

27—29. DEATH OF AHAZIAH KING OF JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxii. 7—9.)

27. by *the way of the garden house*] The events took place close to the royal grounds, for Naboth's vineyard lay in the neighbourhood. The garden house may have been some building at the extremity of the domain by which flight from the scene of destruction appeared easy to Ahaziah. The LXX. however treats it as a proper name, writing Βαθγάν. This has been supposed to be the same as En-gannim ='the well of the gardens' which is identified with the modern *Jenin*. This place lies south from Jezreel on the road to Samaria, and would be on the shortest route by which Ahaziah could make his way to Jerusalem.

And Jehu followed after him] i.e. In the person of his partizans

and said, Smite him also in the chariot. *And they did so* at the going up to Gur, which *is* by Ibleam. And he fled
28 *to* Megiddo, and died there. And his servants carried him *in a chariot* to Jerusalem, and buried him in his sepulchre

and followers, to whom he gave the order 'Smite him also'. Jehu wished to get into Jezreel as soon as possible, and left the fate of the king of Judah to others.

Smite him also in the chariot] In the original the command continues 'at the going up to Gur' (R.V. at the ascent of Gur), as though Jehu knowing the country specified to his men the place where they would be most likely to overtake Ahaziah, where the ground began to rise, and so would retard his flight. This seeming somewhat unnatural, the A.V. inserted 'And they did so', the R.V. 'and they smote him'. Neither Gur nor Ibleam have been identified, and there is some difference between the statements here and the narrative in Chronicles. There we read (2 Chron. xxii. 9) that Jehu 'sought Ahaziah, and they caught him (for he was hid in Samaria) and brought him to Jehu, and when they had slain him they buried him'. The LXX. in this passage has a rendering which suggests how the two accounts may be reconciled. There it is said that Ahaziah had gone to Samaria to be cured (*ἰατρευόμενον*). Suppose that in the pursuit Jehu's command to smite him had been carried out, and the wounded king escaped to Samaria in which direction he was hurrying. If he remained there to have his wound attended to, the emissaries of Jehu might discover him, when the new king came to his capital to take possession, and Ahaziah might then be taken to Megiddo and slain. The Chronicler speaks more at length on the particulars of Ahaziah's death, as the evil issue of an alliance between a king of Judah and the house of Ahab was the sort of lesson on which it suited his purpose to dwell.

And he fled to *Megiddo*] Megiddo was on the southern extremity of the plain of Esdraelon, and by its position was a place of much strategical importance. It had a king when the Israelites entered Canaan, and it was the scene of the battle against the Canaanites in the days of Deborah. It was a place of importance in the days of Solomon (1 Kings iv. 12) for he made it one of his commissariat stations. At a later period it was the scene of Josiah's death (2 Kings xxiii. 29) when he had taken part with Assyria against Pharaoh-necho, king of Egypt. If we consider 'Samaria' in 2 Chron. xxii. 9 to mean 'the land of Samaria' and not the city, Megiddo was a part thereof, and in that way another method of reconciling the narratives in Kings and Chronicles would be found.

and died there] It was part of Jehu's commission to have Ahaziah slain, for he was Ahab's grandson.

28. *his servants carried him* in a chariot *to Jerusalem*] As is seen afterwards by his conduct in Jezebel's case Jehu had no wish to deprive the kin of Ahab of regal burial after they were slain. Hence the servants of Ahaziah would be allowed to carry their master's body to

with his fathers in the city of David. And in the eleventh 29
year of Joram the son of Ahab *began* Ahaziah to reign over
Judah.

And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it;* 30
and she painted her face, and tired her head, and looked
out at a window. And as Jehu entered in at the gate, she 31
said, *Had* Zimri peace, who slew his master? And he lift 32

Jerusalem without molestation. The italics of A.V. in this verse are a mistake. The verb signifies 'to carry in a chariot'.

29. *And in the eleventh year of Joram*...began *Ahaziah to reign*] This verse seems out of place. It is not usual to mention the date at which a king begins to reign, after his death, but at his accession. This was done for Ahaziah in viii. 25, but there it is said that it was in the *twelfth* year of Joram that his reign began. So small a variation is of very little account when we consider how the Jews reckoned the regnal years of their kings, but the unusual position of the notice in this verse casts some suspicion upon it. The LXX. however represents it.

30—37. The fate of Jezebel. (Not in Chronicles.)

30. *when Jehu was come to Jezreel*] Very little time could have elapsed between the slaying of Joram and the advance from Naboth's vineyard to the palace. But the news of what Jehu had done had already been brought to Jezebel, for she knows that he has murdered the king her son. As queen-mother she lived in the royal city, and probably in the royal palace. On the position of the queen-mother and her influence in Eastern courts see on 1 Kings ii. 19. Her action Bp Hall thinks was with the hope 'to daunt the courage of a usurper with the sudden beams of majesty'.

and she painted her face] R.V. **eyes.** The A.V. gives a wrong idea, though placing the literal rendering on the margin 'put her eyes in painting'. The process is common still in the East. The preparation used is made from antimony, which gives when applied to the eyelashes and eyebrows, a dark outline, as a setting to the eyes, which while making them look larger adds also to their brilliancy.

and tired her head] Putting on some ornamental diadem or insignia of royalty. As she was to die, and she could expect no less, she would look the queen to the last.

and looked out at a window] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 4) describes her as 'standing upon the tower'. It is clear that the building in which she was formed part of the city wall, and that the gateway by which the city was entered was close by. So the window may have been in some lofty part.

31. *at the gate*] Of Jezreel. The king's palace was sure to be there, because it was the custom for the king to sit in the gate to hear causes and complaints brought to him for judgement.

Had *Zimri peace, who slew his master?*] R.V. **Is it peace, thou**

up his face to the window, and said, Who *is* on my side? who? And there looked out to him two *or* three eunuchs.
33 And he said, Throw her down. So they threw her down: and *some* of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on
34 the horses: and he trode her under foot. And when he was come in, he did eat and drink, and said, Go, see now this cursed *woman*, and bury her: for she *is* a king's

Zimri, thy master's murderer? The Hebrew has '**his** master's murderer'. These sudden changes of person are common in Hebrew but cannot be reproduced easily in English. For an example cf. verses 1, 2 of Psalm lxviii. 'God...cause His face to shine...that Thy way may be known'. Jezebel could not expect peace from Jehu. The salutation must therefore be looked on as having lost its literal significance, and become a mere exclamation. For Zimri's slaughter of Elah, and his seven days' reign, cf. 1 Kings xvi. 9--20. With a like short tenure of power, and the same fate, Jezebel would threaten Jehu.

32. *to the window*] Here the LXX. adds 'and saw her'. After which it continues, 'And he said, Who art thou? Come down with me. And there looked out &c.' Josephus makes Jezebel's remark to be: 'A pretty servant you, who have killed your master!' and then describes Jehu's reply in much the same way as the LXX. The Hebrew as represented in our version is exactly like the impetuous sentence of such a man as Jehu was.

two or *three eunuchs*] There is no conjunction in the original, as the italics in A.V. indicate. But in all languages the omission of connecting particles between numerals is common. There have however been several explanations offered; as that at first two looked forth and, soon after, another; or that two looked out at one window and three at another. Most likely the omission is a colloquial form of expression. 'Twothree', as one word, is used in some English dialects for 'several'. See Halliwell's Glossary *s.v.*

33. *So they threw her down*] It is easy to understand how such an imperious mistress would have few friends among her servants. And to them, as well as to her, the news of Jehu's revolt and Joram's death would have been brought. So with Eastern fickleness they at once take the side which seems victorious.

some *of her blood*] The fall was from such a height as to kill her, and apparently she was torn and bruised as she descended, so that the blood from her wounds spirted forth at once.

and he trode her under foot] i. e. Drove his horses and chariot over her fallen body. Hence the LXX. renders '*they* trode her'.

34. *And when he was come in*] To the palace, where now he was master. Not only the eunuchs of Jezebel, but the household of Joram appears to have been ready to serve him, for the queen-mother is hardly dead before Jehu is set down to a banquet in the palace.

and said, Go, see now this cursed woman] [R.V. **And he said, See**

And *he* that *was* over the house, and *he* that *was* over the 5
city, the elders also, and the bringers up *of the children*,
sent to Jehu, saying, We *are* thy servants, and will do all
that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou
that which *is* good in thine eyes. Then he wrote a letter 6
the second time to them, saying, If ye *be* mine, and *if* ye
will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men
your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to morrow

Samaria. Perhaps had they known how the two kings had been taken by surprise and shot down as they were expecting to hear a message from the army, the elders of Samaria might have offered some resistance.

5. *And* he *that* was *over the house*] R.V. **household.** This was an official personage, the chief of the royal personal officers. So it appears from the enumeration in this verse that all the authorities yielded at once. The LXX. gives the phrase in the plural 'they that were over the household &c.' With the singular it is not necessary to think of one officer merely. 'Every one of the king's personal servants' is implied.

the bringers up of [R.V. **they that brought up**] the children] Thus the word is translated in the same manner in both verses.

and will do all that thou shalt bid us] As the extermination of every person who might hereafter put forward a claim to the throne was the general rule in Eastern revolutions, we shall hardly be wrong in supposing that these men knew, when they tendered their service to Jehu, the sort of work he would wish them to undertake.

we will not make any king] R.V. **any man king.** The noun is expressed in the original, and makes the profession of submission somewhat more emphatic. There should be no opposition either on behalf of Ahab's family or anybody else.

do thou that *which* is *good*] The LXX. has 'we will do &c.' But this they had already said.

6. *a letter the second time*] Before he presents himself to them, he will let their alarm involve them more deeply than he is involved in the destruction of the royal family.

take ye the heads] So Nicanor's head (1 Macc. vii. 47; 2 Macc. xv. 30) was struck off and brought to Jerusalem, and David smote off the head of Goliath (1 Sam. xvii. 54) and brought it with him from the battle-field.

come to me to Jezreel] From what follows we should not discover that they obeyed this part of the order. But no doubt they did, and were ready at the gate, when Jehu came forth on the morrow, to hear what he would say of their prompt obedience. The distance between Jezreel and Samaria was only a journey of a few hours. The heads seem to have been delivered to their new master on the evening of the day on which they were asked for.

this time. Now the king's sons, *being* seventy persons, *were* with the great *men* of the city, which brought them up.
7 And it came to pass, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons, and slew seventy persons, and put their heads in baskets, and sent him *them* to Jezreel.
8 And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, They have brought the heads of the king's sons. And he said, Lay ye them *in* two heaps *at* the entering in of the gate
9 until the morning. And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people, Ye *be* righteous: behold, I conspired against my master, and

Now the king's sons, &c.] This parenthetic sentence is inserted to show how easy it was, when they were all of one mind, for the tutors to slay the whole family at a blow.

7. *and slew seventy persons*] R.V. **and slew them, even seventy persons.** Though the pronoun is not expressed in the original, it is needed for the sense. The A.V. might signify any seventy persons.

in baskets] The word is that which is used (Jer. xxiv. 2) for the baskets in which the figs were gathered.

sent him them *to Jezreel*] R.V. **sent them unto him.** Before they come themselves, they take care that the price, by which they expect to purchase Jehu's favour, shall be paid down. The change in R.V. from the English idiom to a more close representation of the Hebrew seems altogether unnecessary.

8. *And there came a messenger, and told him*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 5) adds to the picture, and says that the message was received by Jehu, 'While he was at a meal with his friends'.

Lay ye them in *two heaps*] Josephus here says 'one on one side and the other on the other'. No doubt the place was chosen as one of most public resort, and where Jehu meant to come forth as their new king and take his seat next day. As the heads lay there, they would proclaim to the men of Jezreel, how completely Jehu's conduct was accepted in Samaria. Thus without a further blow he secured the submission of the two chief cities.

until the morning] They had arrived in the evening of the day when they were cut off.

9. *he went out, and stood*] At the gate, the place of concourse, where the people usually gathered, and whither recent events would bring them in full number. Jehu in this way began to play the king.

Ye be *righteous*] He is about to make an appeal to the people. He therefore puts them first of all in a good frame of mind towards himself, by acknowledging them to be fit to be arbiters in the case which he is going to put before them. He admits at once that he is as Jezebel had called him 'the murderer of his master' (ix. 31), but before them they see the heads of the whole of Ahab's sons, slain by the rulers

slew him: but who slew all these? Know now that there 10
shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the LORD,
which the LORD spake concerning the house of Ahab: for
the LORD hath done *that* which he spake by his servant
Elijah. So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of 11
Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great *men*, and his kinsfolks,
and his priests, until *he* left him none remaining.

And he arose and departed, and came *to* Samaria. *And* 12
as he *was at* the shearing house in the way, Jehu met with 13

of Samaria. 'Who smote all these?' he asks, feeling confident that his act will fade into insignificance before the enormity of their greater butchery. And he was not disappointed.

who slew [R.V. **smote**] *all these?*] The verb is not the same as in the previous clause, and the same change is needed in verses 11 and 17.

10. *Know now that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord*] Thus Jehu constitutes himself, in the eyes of the people, the instrument by which the Lord is to avenge the evil doings of the house of Ahab. He also leads them to expect that there is more vengeance yet in store. On the phrase 'to fall to the earth' or 'to the ground' signifying 'to be unfulfilled' or 'ineffective', cf. 1 Sam. iii. 19.

11. *and his kinsfolks*] R.V. **familiar friends.** The word indicates those who were well known to him, [LXX. γνωστούς] and contains no notion of kinship. It is rendered, by A.V. 'familiar friends' in Job xix. 14, and 'acquaintance' in Ps. xxxi. 11 and in several other places. The final *s* in *kinsfolks* makes the form unusual in English.

and his priests] On this word, which is most frequently rendered 'priests', see note on 1 Kings iv. 2, where it is pointed out that 'chief ruler' or 'principal officer' appears sometimes to be its meaning. That sense appears more appropriate here, where the family and the acquaintances of Ahab's family are spoken of. The priests of Ahab, who would be the Baal-priests, would be included in the wholesale destruction of the Baal-worship described later on in this chapter.

12—17. ON HIS WAY TO SAMARIA JEHU SLAYS THE BRETHREN OF AHAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH. HE TAKES JEHONADAB TO BE THE WITNESS OF HIS ZEAL FOR JEHOVAH. (Not in Chronicles.)

12. *And he arose and departed, and came* [R.V. **went**] to *Samaria*] Beside being the more strictly correct rendering of the verb, the change in R.V. represents the order of events. Jehu is now starting for Samaria. On the way and before he *came* thither he met Jehonadab, and invited him to be his companion. The LXX. does not represent 'and departed'.

the shearing house] R.V. **the shearing-house of the shepherds.** The original is a more full expression here than in verse 14 below.

the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, Who *are* ye? And they answered, We *are* the brethren of Ahaziah; and we go down to salute the children of the king and the
14 children of the queen. And he said, Take them alive. And they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing house, *even* two and forty men; neither left
15 he any of them. And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab *coming* to meet

So the additional words are needed. The phrase is explained as 'the house of binding of the shepherds' i.e. the place where the sheep were bound preparatory to being shorn. The R. V. margin has 'house of gathering', as the sheep were gathered together before the shearing began. There was probably close by some place suited for travellers to halt in, as it clearly lay along a high road. Thus we can understand how Jehu found the cavalcade of Ahab's kindred stopping there.

13. *the brethren of Ahaziah*] And so part of Ahab's kinsfolk, of whom Jehu was commissioned to leave none remaining.

the children of the king] i.e. Of Joram. They manifestly knew nothing of what had happened in the last few days in Jezreel.

the children of the queen] The original is the word employed elsewhere for the 'queen-mother'. Cf. 1 Kings xv. 13. So here the word must have reference to Jezebel, whose influence in Israel was very great. The LXX. notes the word by rendering it *ἡ δυναστεύουσα*.

Take them alive] i.e. Make them prisoners. Perhaps for a moment he was uncertain what he should do with them, however being of Ahab's lineage they must share the fate of the rest of that house.

And they took them alive] The LXX. has nothing to represent these words. The 'pit' (R.V. margin, **cistern**) was the great pond or pool in which the sheep were washed before shearing.

15. *Jehonadab the son of Rechab*] We are told (1 Chron. ii. 55) that the house of Rechab belonged to the Kenites. The marriage of Moses to a Kenite wife (Judg. i. 16) led to the Kenites going up with the children of Judah into the wilderness, and so they came to dwell among the people of Israel. We read of them several times in the history of Israel. Jael, who slew Sisera, was the wife of Heber the Kenite (Judg. iv. 17), and Saul shewed kindness to the Kenites when he was sent to destroy Amalek (1 Sam. xv. 6). Of Jehonadab (the name is also written *Jonadab*) we learn (Jer. xxxv. 6—7) that he forbade his descendants to drink wine, or to live in cities, and follow settled occupations. They were always to lead a nomad life; we find too that this ordinance of Jonadab had been observed down to the days of Jeremiah. It is clear therefore that he, who was able to lay it down, and cause it to be kept, must have been a man of much influence, and one whose friendship and countenance might serve Jehu's cause at the outset of his reign. We see also that Jonadab was thoroughly at one with Jehu in the destruction of Baal-worship. We

him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart *is* with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give *me* thine hand. And he gave *him* his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. And he said, Come with me, and see my zeal 16
for the LORD. So they made him ride in his chariot. And 17
when he came *to* Samaria, he slew all that remained unto

may therefore count his kinsmen as among the more faithful portion of the people of Israel. With the double form, Jonadab and Jehonadab, compare Johanan and Jehohanan, Joiada and Jehoiada, Joram and Jehoram.

Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 6. 6) describes Jonadab as 'a good man and a just, who had been long a friend of Jehu, and who greeted him and began to applaud all that he had done according to God's will for the destruction of the house of Ahab'.

Is thine heart right] Here the LXX. adds 'with my heart', and later in the verse after Jonadab's answer 'It is' there is inserted in the LXX. 'And Jehu said'. These insertions make the dialogue more distinct, but there is no need to suppose that anything has fallen out from the Hebrew text in either place.

If it be] The Hebrew is literally 'and it is'. But this form is often employed as equivalent to 'if it is'. Cf. Judg. vi. 13, where 'if the Lord be with us' is literally 'and the Lord is with us'. See also Driver, *Heb. Tenses*, 149.

into the chariot] For a great personage to cause another to ride with him in his chariot was a mark of distinction. Cf. 1 Kings xx. 33. It is noteworthy that Jehu appears to have attached much importance to Jonadab's support and sympathy. He must therefore have considered that the people of Samaria would be influenced thereby, and if they were likely to be so influenced we may judge that many in Israel regarded a servant of Jehovah with a respect which even the Baal-worship and calf-worship had not been able to destroy.

16. *see my zeal for the Lord*] This was the boast of a man who did not know his own heart. He had some zeal and manifested it in the destruction of Baal, but stopped short at the suppression of the calves in Dan and Bethel. Josephus makes Jehu invite Jonadab to be witness 'how he will spare no wicked man, but will destroy both the false prophets and the false priests and those who lead the multitude astray so that they leave the worship of the Most High, and adore strange gods: for it is a most honest and pleasing sight for a good and righteous man to see the wicked being punished'.

17. *all that remained unto Ahab in Samaria*] i.e. Others more remotely connected with the royal family than the direct descendants. The great men in Samaria having slain the sons of Ahab, must be content to side with their new ruler in clearing off all that remained of his connexions, for otherwise vengeance might have awaked against themselves.

Ahab in Samaria, till *he* had destroyed him, according to the saying of the LORD, which he spake to Elijah.

18 And Jehu gathered all the people together, and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little; *but* Jehu shall serve him
19 much. Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice *to do* to Baal; whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did *it* in subtilty, to the intent that *he* might destroy the worship-
20 pers of Baal. And Jehu said, Proclaim a solemn assembly

according to the saying [R.V. **word**] *of the Lord*] This is the more usual expression, but R.V. has left '*saying* of the Lord' in 1 Kings xv. 29.

18—31. JEHU BY SUBTILTY DESTROYS THE WORSHIPPERS OF BAAL AND THE HOUSE OF BAAL. HE WALKS IN THE WAYS OF JEROBOAM. (Not in Chronicles.)

18. *Ahab served Baal a little*] Hitherto Jehu's action had been directed only against the family of Ahab, and the people had no reason to suppose that a religious reform was in the new king's thoughts. We may judge from the ready acceptance of the announcement in this verse, that Jehu had been no different from the rest, and had gone in the way where Ahab and Jezebel led. Josephus represents him as saying that he would have *twice as many* gods as Ahab had.

19. *call unto me all the prophets of Baal*] The LXX. represents Jehu's words as an address to the prophets of Baal, 'Now, O ye prophets of Baal, call ye unto me all his servants &c.'

all his servants] R.V. **worshippers.** As the same word is so translated at the close of this verse, and again in 21, 22, and 23, there can be no warrant for a change in this place. R.V. makes the whole consistent.

all his priests] These were not the same as the prophets. The latter gave oracles to enquirers and taught the mysteries of the worship, the priests attended on the numerous sacrifices.

Jehu did it *in subtilty*] The word in the original is one connected with the same root as the name Jacob, a name interpreted by Esau to signify 'supplanter'. Such an action as his implies a certain degree of guile, and hence the sense in this verse.

20. *Proclaim* [R.V. **Sanctify**] *a solemn assembly*] The verb is not the same which is correctly rendered 'they proclaimed' in the next clause. It is constantly rendered 'Sanctify' elsewhere. Cf. Exod. xiii. 12; Josh. vii. 13; Joel i. 14; ii. 15, 16; and is the word used of making a *holy* war. See Jer. vi. 4; li. 27, 28, &c., where 'prepare' is the appropriate translation. 'Proclaim' is found as the equivalent nowhere but here.

a solemn assembly] The word (with a slightly different pointing) is used in Lev. xxiii. 36; Numb. xxix. 35; Deut. xvi. 8; Neh. viii. 18, of the solemn gatherings of God's people for their sacred worship. Jehu by using such a term seems to be putting Baal entirely on a level

for Baal. And they proclaimed *it.* And Jehu sent through 21
all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not. And they came *into* the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was full from one end to another. And he said unto *him* that *was* over 22
the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of

with Jehovah, a proceeding that went, as he professed to do, beyond all Ahab's practices.

21. *And Jehu sent through all Israel*] Here the LXX. adds the words of the notice; 'saying, And now all ye worshippers, and all his priests and all his prophets, let no one be absent, for I am about to make a great sacrifice: whosoever shall be absent, he shall not live'. Similarly after 'And all the worshippers of Baal came' there is inserted 'and all his priests and all his prophets'. These amplifications are no evidence that the Hebrew text ever had more than now stands in it. The LXX. often exhibits a desire to round off a narrative in a way very unlike Hebrew.

not a man left that came not] They had been largely encouraged in previous reigns, but now they were to be elevated above all others. Hence all that desired to be popular with the new king and could establish their claim to be counted Baalites, would reckon it a good chance, and come without fail.

the house of Baal] 'House' is the constant word for 'temple' in the Old Testament, and no doubt this building was as magnificent as the architectural skill of Tyrian workmen, and the zeal of the house of Ahab, with whom architecture seems to have been a passion, could make it. Hence it would be large enough to contain in its spacious courts an immense number of worshippers. For 'house' used of Solomon's temple, see 1 Kings viii. 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, and constantly in the history of David and Solomon.

from one end to another] The Hebrew phrase is 'mouth to mouth' but there is no need to understand, with margin of A. V. 'so full that they stood mouth to mouth' which they only could have done in pairs. As in other languages, 'mouth' is used in Hebrew for any opening, as of a sack (Gen. xlii. 27), of a cave (Josh. x. 18, 22, 27), and so any doorway or entrance. Hence here 'from one entrance to the other'. Almost the same phrase is used Ezra ix. 11 (as will be seen from margin of A. V.), of a land filled 'from one end to the other'.

22. *he said unto* him *that* was *over the vestry*] The vestry must have belonged to the house of Baal; we cannot suppose that the king's wardrobe-keeper had a stock of robes to supply such a multitude of worshippers. Probably because of the control which had been exercised there by the house of Ahab, Jehu could give orders in Baal's temple and have them obeyed. It appears from the narrative that vestments were not used only by the priests, but by all the worshippers as well. Perhaps there was some distinction between the character and material of the robes.

23 Baal. And he brought them forth vestments. And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, *into* the house of Baal, and said unto the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of 24 the LORD, but the worshippers of Baal only. And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings, Jehu appointed fourscore men without, and said, *If* any of the men whom I *have* brought into your hands escape, *he that* 25 *letteth him go*, his life *shall be* for the life of him. And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the

23. *Search, and look*, &c.] Not only did he manifest anxiety that all the Baal-worshippers should be present, but that none of the rest of the people should be included in the destruction. As the worshippers would be full of the thought that they were to become possessed of special privileges in the new reign, they were sure to be the best agents in excluding any who could not shew that he had belonged to Baal's congregation before. Josephus strangely says 'When he had come into the house with his friend Jonadab he gave commandment to search lest any *alien* or *stranger* should be among them. For he did not wish a *foreigner* to take part in their sacrifices'.

24. *And when they went in*] R. V. omits 'when', and makes this clause an independent sentence. The LXX. has 'and he went in' (καὶ εἰσῆλθε).

Jehu appointed] In consequence of what has been done in the previous clause, R.V. renders '**Now** Jehu **had** appointed'. And as there is in the sentence a pronoun and preposition of which the A. V. takes no account, R. V. adds **him** = for himself, after 'appointed'.

If *any of the men whom I* have *brought*] R.V. **I bring**. The sentence is very elliptical as will be seen from the italics of A.V. But the same words only are represented in LXX. For the phrase cf. 1 Kings xx. 39, 42.

25. *as soon as he had made an end of offering*] That is, when the priests had completed the offering. We are not to suppose that Jehu himself acted as priest on the occasion, only as he had been the convoker of the solemn assembly, the whole ceremony is referred to him.

Jehu said to the guard] The 'guard' is that body of 'runners' which appears in the history as soon as a king was appointed, and which played a part in all state parade. Thus both Adonijah and Absalom provided them with 'fifty men to run before them' when they aspired to the throne (2 Sam. xv. 1; 1 Kings i. 5). They are first spoken of in 1 Sam. xxii. 17, where the text of A.V. gives 'footmen' (R.V. **guard**) with 'runners' or 'guard' in the margin. Such men must necessarily be of great physical strength, and so well suited to do Jehu's work on this occasion.

cast them *out*] There is no pronoun expressed in the Hebrew. And

captains, Go in, *and* slay them; let none come forth. And they smote them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast *them* out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. And they brought forth the images out 26
of the house of Baal, and burnt them. And they brake 27
down the image of Baal, and brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto *this* day. Thus 28

it is not easy to see why the dead bodies should have been cast out of a place which they wished to be thoroughly defiled. Hence it has been thought that the 'casting' here spoken of refers only to the throwing aside the dead to make their way through the courts towards the central portion of the building, where probably the more important sacrificing priests were stationed.

and went to the city of the house of Baal] The word rendered 'city' is applied to smaller enclosures than we usually understand by it now, and seems here to indicate some principal part of the temple edifice. In illustration of the use of this word for some small place, see Numb. xiii. 19, 'What *cities* they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds'. So too the desolate daughter of Zion is compared (Is. i. 8) to 'a cottage in a vineyard, a lodge in a garden of cucumbers', and then, in parallelism with these figures, to 'a besieged *city*'. In such passages also as Gen. iv. 17 *city* can only signify some solid substantial dwelling-place in distinction to the tents of the nomad population.

For a similar change of sense we may compare our English word 'town', which in the earliest English *tûn* (and in Icelandic still) signifies an enclosure, generally a farm-stead with the necessary out-buildings surrounded by one fence.

26. *And they brought forth the images*] R.V. **pillars.** On this word see above, iii. 2 note. The same change is also made by R.V. in the next verse. The LXX. has the singular in this verse (στήλην) and the plural in 27. As the worship of Astarte was combined with that of Baal, we can understand that in such a splendid temple as that which Ahab and Jezebel had erected, there would be more pillars (or sacred obelisks) than one, though one would be specially known as 'the pillar of Baal'.

and burnt them] So that these more numerous pillars must have been of wood. Probably they were of less size than the chief obelisk.

27. *they brake down the image of Baal*] As the verb is the same as that used immediately afterwards for the breaking down of the house, we may be almost certain that this chief object of worship was of stone. The verb is constantly employed of pulling down buildings. The LXX. omits the next clause, 'And brake down the house of Baal'.

a draught house] The word 'draught' is found again in Matth. xv. 17; Mark vii. 19. Cf. also Burton, *Anatomy*, p. 165, 'Muck hills, *draughts*, sinks, where any carcasses or carrion lies'. For the idea cf. Ezra vi. 11; Dan. ii. 5; iii. 29, 'their houses shall be made a dunghill'.

unto this *day*] See above on viii. 22. For the commands in the

29 Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. Howbeit *from* the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, Jehu departed not from after them, *to wit*, the golden calves that
30 *were in* Beth-el, and that *were* in Dan. And the LORD said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing *that* which *is* right in mine eyes, *and* hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that *was* in mine heart, thy children of the fourth *generation* shall sit on the throne of Israel.
31 But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart: *for* he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin.
32 In those days the LORD began to cut Israel short: and

law to destroy the objects of heathen worship cf. Deut, vii. 5, 25, xii. 2, 3, where a destruction like that described here is enjoined.

28. *Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel*] The false worship had not taken such root in the land that it could ever revive again. Probably no buildings were reared to Baal except in the cities where the royal family dwelt. Hence when they were cut off, it would have no fosterers.

29. *who* [R.V. **wherewith he**] *made Israel to sin*] See above on ii. 3. The same change is to be made in verse 31.

golden calves that were] From 1 Kings xii. 28, 29, we see that only *one* image was in each place.

30. *Because thou hast done well*] i. e. To a certain extent. When David strives to do God's will perfectly with a true heart, the promise is that 'he shall not be without a lamp before God for ever'. The partial obedience of Jehu obtains the gift of a succession for four generations.

thy children [R.V. **sons**] *of the fourth* generation] For the fulfilment see chap. xv. 12. The son of Jehu was Jehoahaz who was succeeded by his son Joash, and he by Jeroboam II., with whose son Zechariah the fourth generation and the sovereignty of Jehu's family terminated.

31. *with all his heart*] He only went partially on the right way, and probably personal ambition had much to do with his zeal against Baal. With the calves it was another matter. They formed, as it were, the emblems of Israel's independence, and so the king's feeling would be enlisted on their side.

32—36. CUTTING SHORT OF ISRAEL. JEHU'S DEATH, HIS SUCCESSOR AND THE DURATION OF HIS REIGN. (Not in Chronicles.)

32. *to cut Israel short*] Literally 'to cut off *in* Israel'. The meaning is 'to give over some parts of their land into the enemy's hand'. This, it is said, should rather be expressed by 'to cut off *from* Israel'. But, as it stands, the context makes all clear enough. What had been

Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; from Jordan 33
eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reu-
benites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which *is* by the
river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan. Now the rest of the 34
acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, *are* they

part of Israel's possessions, was severed from it, and passed into the power of Hazael and the Syrians.

in all the coasts of Israel] In the days when the A.V. was made, 'coast' meant 'any border land' and had no necessary relation to the sea. The 'coasts' described in the next verse are all on the east of Jordan, and entirely away from the Mediterranean. Hazael must have thoroughly overrun and taken possession of the trans-Jordanic part of Israel.

33. *Gilead*] This country lay between Bashan on the north, and Moab and Ammon on the south. It was of a mountainous character, and was chosen by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh because it was so well adapted for the pasturage of their numerous flocks. These tribes were all included at this time in Hazael's conquest, and so the phrase 'cut Israel short' was fully borne out, for one quarter of the whole ten tribes was thus taken from her.

Aroer] This city was on the south boundary of the tribe of Reuben, which was the southernmost of the three trans-Jordanic tribes. Thus it marks the extreme limit in that direction of the conquests here mentioned, while Bashan marks that on the north. Nothing was left to Israel, east of the Jordan, for Bashan was the northern part of the land assigned to the half tribe of Manasseh.

Arnon] This torrent bed, full of water in the rainy season, but dry in summer, after the character of all the clefts in the east of Jordan, is wrongly described by 'river' of A.V. In R.V. it is rendered **valley of** Arnon. It formed the border between Israel and Moab.

Bashan] This district, which like Gilead was mountainous, lay between Gilead and Mt Hermon. It was well wooded also. 'The oaks of Bashan' are frequently mentioned, and so are the cattle, the 'fat bulls of Bashan'. The loss of such a district must have been very fatal to Israel. After this notice Bashan, which in the early days is often spoken of in connexion with Og, the king whom the Israelites vanquished on entering the land, disappears from the Bible history. Hazael's conquest was never recovered.

34. *the acts of Jehu*] Jehu is one of the kings of whom we learn something from the cuneiform inscriptions. There we are told that he was the ally of Assyria. Hence he was the enemy of Hazael who was frequently at war with the Assyrians. To Assyria Jehu appears to have been a tributary ally, for his tribute is twice mentioned in the records of Salmanasar II. It is noteworthy that in both places he is spoken of as Jehu *the son of Omri*. The family of Omri, from their magnificence, and their alliance with Tyre and Sidon, must have exercised a great influence among the neighbouring powers, and their

not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
35 Israel? And Jehu slept with his fathers: and they buried
him in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son reigned in his
36 stead. And the time that Jehu reigned over Israel in
Samaria *was* twenty and eight years.

11 And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her
son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal.
2 But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of

name would thus be employed to designate the family on the throne of Israel without regard to whether they were descendants of Omri or not. (See Schrader, *Keilinschriften u. das A. T.* p. 105 seqq., Engl. Translation, vol. i. p. 199 seqq.)

and all his might] Though Jehu's reign marks the commencement of the decay of Israel, and is specially noteworthy for the loss of territory, yet Jehu himself appears to have made his mark as a warrior. The LXX. expands the word 'might' and says 'all his dynasty and the conspiracies which he formed'.

35. *Jehoahaz his son*] We are told (chap. xiii. 1) that Jehu's death, and the accession of Jehoahaz, was in the three and twentieth year of Joash, king of Judah. As Jehu reigned twenty-eight years he must have been on the throne about *five* or *six* years when Joash was made king. In chapter xii. 1 the accession of Joash is placed in the *seventh* year of Jehu, but from the way in which the Jews reckoned the regnal years of their kings there need be no contradiction between these statements.

CH. XI. 1—3. ATHALIAH, HAVING SLAIN ALL THE SEED ROYAL OF JUDAH, EXCEPT JOASH, USURPS THE THRONE FOR SIX YEARS. (2 Chron. xxii. 10—12.)

1. *And* [R.V. NOW] *when Athaliah*] Athaliah was the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, and became the wife of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat.

she arose and destroyed] The verb here rendered 'arose' is often joined with another verb to give the notion of 'setting earnestly about' any business. Thus in Exod. xxxii. 1 it is used '*Up* make us gods', and in 1 Kings xiv. 2 '*Arise* and disguise thyself', also 1 Chron. xxii. 19 '*Arise* therefore and build ye the sanctuary'. See too Gen. xxxvii. 35 'And all his sons and all his daughters *rose up* to comfort him'.

all the seed royal] i.e. All those that remained after the destruction wrought by Jehu on the brethren of Ahaziah (see above x. 14). Judah, as well as Israel, seems at this date to have had no lack of families in the royal houses. Those whom Athaliah slew were of course the male members of the royal family.

2. *But Jehosheba*] Called in 2 Chron. xxii. 11 Jehoshabeath. She was only half sister to Ahaziah, and not the daughter of Athaliah. Josephus says she was Ὀχοζίᾳ ὁμοπάτριος ἀδελφή. In Chronicles we learn that she was the wife of Jehoiada the priest, which explains the

Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stale him from among the king's sons which were slain; and they hid him, *even* him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain. And he was with her hid *in* the 3
house of the LORD six years. And Athaliah *did* reign over the land.

And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fet the rulers 4

ease with which she could arrange for hiding the child she had saved in the house of the Lord.

took Joash] He must have been a mere babe at the time, not a year old. Cf. *vv.* 3 and 21.

and stale him from among the king's sons which [R.V. **that**] *were slain*] The slight change conforms the sentence to Chronicles, where the words are exactly the same. To make the two passages alike, as in the Hebrew, R.V. reads the rest of the sentence thus **even him and his nurse, *and put them* in the bed chamber, and they hid him from Athaliah, so** &c.'

the bedchamber] A chamber where beds were stowed away. Josephus says τὸ ταμιεῖον τῶν κλινῶν, the storeroom for beds and couches. The fury of Athaliah would leave no sleeping room unsearched, but in such a place it was possible for nurse and child to lie hid till there was a chance of getting into more secure shelter.

3. *And he was with her*] i.e. With his nurse, who continued to tend him after he had grown somewhat older.

in *the house of the Lord*] We learn from the description of Solomon's temple (see note on 1 Kings vi. 5) that it was surrounded on two sides and one end with three stories of chambers. It is not said to what use they were put, but we may safely conclude that they were under the control of the high-priest, and that, for such a purpose as is here described, he would have no scruple about using them, even if on ordinary occasions no one dwelt in them.

six years] Perhaps Athaliah was not aware that any one of the royal children had been saved. She gave order for their destruction, and her agents did all they could to carry out her design. Perhaps when they could not find Joash some other slain babe was substituted, and Athaliah would know no difference. The house of the Lord was not a place in which she herself was likely to be interested, and if the rooms around it were never as a rule used for dwelling-rooms suspicion would not be directed to them, and so they would go unsearched.

And Athaliah did *reign*] R.V. **reigned.** As in Chronicles.

4—16. JEHOIADA THE PRIEST MAKES JOASH KING, AND ATHALIAH IS PUT TO DEATH. (2 Chron. xxiii. 1—15.)

4. *And the* [R.V. **in the**] *seventh year*] So Chronicles. Jehoiada's name is introduced very abruptly and without any specification of his office till we come to verse 9. This points to an early date for the document from which the compiler of Kings made his extracts. It is

over hundreds, with the captains and the guard, and brought them to him *into* the house of the LORD, and made a covenant with them, and took an oath of them in the house of
5 the LORD, and shewed them the king's son. And he com-

only when the events are somewhat recent that the names of important actors in them can be introduced without some description.

fet the rulers [R.V. **captains**] *over hundreds*] The change in R.V. makes the passage conform to Deut. i. 15 where the various subdivisions of the officers are mentioned. For other allusions thereto cf. Exod. xviii. 21, 25, and when the more military character had been introduced 1 Sam. viii. 12; xxii. 7; 2 Sam. xviii. 1. In the parallel passage A.V. has 'captains' 2 Chron. xxiii. 1. *Fet* is the constant preterite of 'fetch' in the English of A.V. For similar instances of dropping the 'ch' of the present, compare the preterites of *catch* and *search*, which, as far as sound is concerned, might be written *caut* and *saut*.

with the captains and the guard] R.V. **of the Carites and of the guard**. Here both nouns are in a construction which shews that the captains over hundreds belonged to both the classes of men here mentioned. Hence, as the word rendered 'guard' is literally 'runners' and applies to the royal body-guard, so the 'Carites' are thought to be a similar class. The word only occurs in this chapter verses 4 and 19 and in 2 Sam. xx. 23, where the *Keri* (marginal reading) substitutes 'Cherethites'. As in that passage the Carites, or Cherethites, and Pelethites formed David's guard, so at this time there appear to have been similar body-guards attached to the palace in Jerusalem. The word may be derived from a verb which marks them as 'executioners', which office was performed, as we see from many instances, by those in immediate attendance on the king.

These officers were strictly military, and it is worth notice that the compiler in Chronicles, who is usually thought to lay most stress on, and give most importance to, what was done by the priests and Levites, yet at this point is very careful to notice the names of these five soldiers 'Azariah the son of Jeroham, and Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, and Azariah the son of Obed, and Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri', while he gives no such prominence to the names of any of the priests or Levites, except the chief actor Jehoiada.

into *the house of the Lord*] We can see from such passages as Jer. xxxv. 2, where the prophet is bidden to bring the Rechabites 'into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers' that the rooms by which the temple was surrounded were used for meetings such as the one here described.

and made a covenant with them] In 2 Chronicles we are told how these officers were first employed: 'They went about in Judah and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah and the chief of the fathers of Israel (R.V. **heads of fathers'** *houses* **in Israel**), and they came to Jerusalem. Jehoiada sent them to the persons with whom, by reason of his office, he would have the greatest influence, but the operations were ultimately to be under the command of the captains of the guard.

manded them, saying, This *is* the thing that ye shall do; A third *part* of you that enter in on the sabbath shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; and a third *part* 6
shall be at the gate of Sur; and a third *part* at the gate

5. *And he commanded them*] The two things to be provided for were the safety of the young king's person when it should be known to Athaliah and her party that he was alive, and the guarding of the royal palace, so that no personal troop of Athaliah's might make an attack on the king's party, and at the proper moment the palace might be seized and the king brought to it and set on the throne. These duties Jehoiada deputed to the five captains whom he had taken into his confidence. Three bodies of men, presumably each under a captain, are to watch the palace at different points, while two other bodies are to be in charge of the house of the Lord about the king. It is not without interest to observe that this fivefold division of the guards corresponds to the number of the captains selected, though they and their number are only mentioned in the narrative of 2 Chronicles. We see from this, that although we may not, at this distance of time, be able to make clear every detail of the two stories, they fit here very remarkably into each other.

a third part *of you that enter* [R.V. come] *in on the sabbath*] Those who are to take part in the work that is planned are to be the guards who enter on their duty on the Sabbath, and those who are going off duty. As the words are addressed to the captains over hundreds the 'of you' must apply to the soldiers under their command. But it is perfectly intelligible that a somewhat similar arrangement of the Levites might also be made, and that they should take their part in work of restoring the king. From the narrative in 2 Chronicles we see that the priests and Levites were arranged in 3 divisions, one of which was to have the duty of porters, as it seems, at the doors of the temple, another to be at the king's house, and the third at the gate of the foundation. On this last position see below. Thus, as in the case of the purely military arrangement, the larger number of the priestly and Levitical body was to serve near the royal palace. We note also from Chronicles that the occasion of some feast was arranged as the time for carrying out the plan. For it is said that 'all the people shall be in the courts of the house of the Lord'.

shall even be keepers of the watch of the king's house] R.V. omits 'even'. The LXX. adds 'at the doorway' in the end of this clause. No doubt they would be stationed so as to prevent any one from the palace coming forth, without their consent, to interfere with the proceedings at the temple.

6. *at the gate of Sur*] R.V. omits 'of'. This gate is nowhere else named. The similarity between the original words סוּר, *Sur* and יְסוֹד given in Chronicles, and rendered 'foundation', makes it not unlikely that the 'gate Sur' here, and 'the gate of the foundation' (2 Chron. xxiii. 5) are the same place, though it is impossible, if this be so, to decide which is the correct reading, for 'the gate of the foundation' is

behind the guard: so shall ye keep the watch of the house,
7 that it be not broken down. And two parts of all you that go
forth on the sabbath, even they shall keep the watch of the
8 house of the LORD about the king. And ye shall compass
the king round about, every man with his weapons in his
hand: and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be
slain: and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he

spoken of nowhere else. The LXX. has here ἐν τῇ πύλῃ τῶν ὁδῶν, 'in the gate of the ways' and in Chronicles ἐν τῇ πύλῃ τῇ μέσῃ 'at the middle gate'.

at the gate behind the guard] The guard here spoken of are the 'runners' who formed a part of the royal body-guard. Nothing is more likely than that such a body would have special quarters assigned to them in the neighbourhood of the palace, and if they were at this time thought to be favourable to Athaliah, the necessity would be apparent of putting a body of well-affected men close to them to keep them in check.

so shall ye keep the watch of the house] The 'house' is the palace, which was thus to be strongly guarded at three places.

that it be not broken down] R.V. **and be a barrier.** The word is a noun in apposition with 'watch' and defines its character. The word is unrepresented in the LXX.

7. *And two parts of all you that go forth*] R.V. **And the two companies of you, even all that go forth.** All those men who were going off duty at the palace were to divide themselves into two bodies, and go and serve at the temple to protect the king. The 'of you' refers to the purely military body, as in verse 5. We see in verse 11 that their duty was outside the temple building, while the narrative in Chronicles in almost identical language appoints the Levites for duty within the temple.

8. *And ye shall compass the king round about*] Though the pronoun is changed, the same persons are intended, who were to be a body-guard for the young king in every movement at this critical time.

he that cometh within the ranges] R.V. **ranks.** This is the point where the distinction is most marked between the duties to be discharged by the soldiers and by the Levites. In 2 Chron. xxiii. 7 it is said: 'And the Levites shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand; and *whosoever cometh into the house*, he shall be put to death'. From this we find that the Levites were to form a guard for the king's person within the temple, while the soldiers discharged the same office in the court, and when he was conducted from the temple to the palace. So the one body is bidden to take summary vengeance on any intruder within the sacred building, the other on any who should break through their ranks to get within the enclosure and so draw near to the king after he had come forth.

as [R.V. **when**] *he goeth out and as* [R.V. **when**] *he cometh in*] This change assimilates the rendering to 2 Chronicles.

cometh in. And the captains over the hundreds did ac- 9
cording to all *things* that Jehoiada the priest commanded:
and they took every man his men that were to come in on
the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath,
and came to Jehoiada the priest. And to the captains over 10
hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields,
that *were* in the temple of the LORD. And the guard stood, 11

9. *and the captains over the* [R.V. omits **the**] *hundreds did according to all* things] R.V. omits **things**, for which there is nothing in the original. It is also not in the Hebrew of 2 Chronicles, though there the A.V. prints it without italics. R.V. omits it there also. The Levites must have been in some degree at least, where they were acting as guards about the palace, under the control of these centurions, by whom also according to the narrative in 2 Chron. they had been gathered out of all the cities of Judah.

that Jehoiada the priest commanded] He was the prime mover, and both the Levitical and military guards acted together to carry out his design. The LXX. instead of any rendering of the word for 'priest' has ὁ συνετός. It seems as if the last three consonants of the name Jehoiada (יהוידע) had been read twice over, the second time as if they were the participle of the verb 'to know'.

with them [R.V. **those**] *that should go out*] So both sets of men were engaged; and in the case of the Levites it is said in 2 Chron. xxiii. 8, 'For Jehoiada the priest dismissed not the courses', i.e. did not allow those members of the Levitical courses, whose term of service was then ended, to go away, as on other occasions they were free to do.

10. *And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give*] R.V. **And the priest delivered to the captains over hundreds.** Thus the English is made to correspond to the Hebrew order more closely, and to the translation in 2 Chron. It is to be observed that both accounts agree about the weapons being delivered to the soldiery by Jehoiada, thus making clear that to both compilers it was known that the whole undertaking was controlled by the guard and not by the priests and Levites, though, as his manner is, the writer of Chronicles puts them in the forefront as much as he can.

king David's spears and shields] R.V. **the spears and shields that had been king David's.** This is the form in 2 Chronicles, except that there 'bucklers' are mentioned between 'spears' and 'shields'. These weapons were those which David in his wars had taken from his enemies, and stored probably in the chambers round the temple. For the practice of so devoting the weapons of the conquered cf. the sword of Goliath laid up in store with Ahimelech at Nob (1 Sam. xxi. 9), and the shields which David took from the servants of Hadadezer (2 Sam. viii. 7) and carried to Jerusalem.

that were *in the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] It is the same word which is rendered 'house' frequently in this chapter. Of course it means 'temple', but the English reader might suppose that the

every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king, from the right corner of the temple to the left corner
11 of the temple, *along* by the altar and the temple. And he brought forth the king's son, and put the crown upon him, and *gave him* the Testimony; and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapt their hands, and said, God

original had here a different word. The same change has to be made in the next verse, three times over; and in the parallel verse in 2 Chron.

11. *And the guard stood*] These are the 'runners', the foot-soldiers, whose duty was on the outside of the temple.

round about the king, &c.] The R.V. changes the order of words here, as well as the rendering, to that which is adopted for the same Hebrew in 2 Chron. They are thus translated, **from the right side of the house to the left side of the house along by the altar and the house, by the king round about.** To understand how these guards were ranged it must be remembered that the altar stood in the court in front of the temple porch. Hence from each corner of the porch, on the right and left, the men were ranged in lines between the temple and the altar, so that when the king came forth he could advance between them, and the lines gradually came towards each other as they neared the altar, so that it can be said of them that they were along by the altar and by the house. The space enclosed by them would be somewhat triangular in form, the base being the width of the temple porch. Into this space Joash was brought forth, and there proclaimed and anointed in the sight of the people who in 2 Chronicles are said to have been gathered in the temple courts.

12. *And he brought forth the king's son*] i.e. Jehoiada did so, who had charge of him. The name 'king's son' is perhaps given to him here rather than his personal name, to mark that the struggle was for the true successor.

and gave him *the Testimony*] The word so rendered occurs first in Exod. xvi. 34, where it is directed that the pot of manna is to be laid up before the *Testimony*. That by this is meant some portion of the Law which was given to Moses is made clear in a later passage. In Exod. xxv. 16, 21 it is described as 'the *Testimony* which I shall give thee'. We need not suppose that in these passages the whole law of Moses is intended, but the name given to the first portion of the Law would no doubt be continued in after times for all that was considered to be the divine revelation. Hence we must here understand the Law, as the people then possessed it. Express direction is given in Deut. xvii. 18, 19, that when a king shall be chosen he shall have a copy of the Law, which he shall study 'that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes to do them'. So the delivery of the Law would naturally form a most solemn portion of the coronation ceremony.

and anointed him] This was not done as far as we know with all kings, but the present was a special occasion, and no part of the

save the king. And when Athaliah heard the noise of the 13
guard *and* of the people, she came to the people *into* the
temple of the LORD. And when she looked, behold, the 14
king stood by a pillar, as the manner *was*, and the princes

ordinance would be omitted which could help to mark in a religious manner the restoration of the true scion of David's house.

and they clapt their hands] A natural expression of approval and applause, though not frequently spoken of in the O. Test. It is found in the Psalms xlvii. 1 of exultation before God, and the figure is used Ps. xcviii. 8 'Let the floods clap their hands'. But it is quite as frequently used where rejoicing over a fallen enemy is the cause (cf. Job xxvii. 23; Lam. ii. 15; Nah. iii. 19).

God save the king] Literally 'Let the king live'. So they cried when Saul was made king, 1 Sam. x. 24, and at the feast of Adonijah when he sought to be king, 1 Kings i. 25.

13. *And when Athaliah heard the noise*] The arrangements had all been made so cautiously that the queen-mother had no knowledge of what was being done. But we may suppose that ere long the report would reach her through her attendants, and so she went, where otherwise she was not wont to go, toward the house of the Lord. Unless she had thought it some matter of grave concern we cannot fancy her going out to put an end by her presence, if possible, to the proceeding. Josephus' account is that 'having heard the tumult and applause unexpectedly, Athaliah was greatly troubled, and hastened with her private troops from the palace: that the priests admitted her into the temple area, but prevented the armed men who were with her from entering'. The Bible narratives do not speak of a guard accompanying Athaliah, but it is not likely that she would go forth on such an errand without one, though the influence of a queen-mother was very powerful.

of the guard and *of the people*] There is no conjunction in the Hebrew, and the guard were the 'runners' spoken of above. The narrative in Chronicles transposes the two words, and the rendering there is 'of the people running', but probably the conjunction is wanting in both cases through the error of the scribe. So in 2 Chron. xxiii. 11 the R.V. has put on the margin 'of the people, of the guard and of those who praised the king'.

she came to the people into *the temple* [R.V. **house**] *of the Lord*] The assembly was a notable one and seems to have been at the time of some feast which had brought a more than usually great concourse to Jerusalem.

14. *And when she looked, behold, the king*] R.V. **And she looked and behold the king.** This, the literal translation of the Hebrew, is the form adopted in 2 Chron. The original is the same in both places.

stood by a [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] By this word is clearly designated some spot which was the special position of the king on such occasions. We see that Athaliah took in the whole scene at a glance and knew without telling what was going on. The word 'pillar' is the same which is used for the two, Jachin and Boaz (1 Kings vii. 21), which stood as

and the trumpeters by the king, and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets: and Athaliah rent
15 her clothes, and cried, Treason, Treason. But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host, and said unto them, Have her forth without the ranges: and him that followeth her kill with the

ornamental pillars in the porch of the temple, and which being ornamental could doubtless be seen by all in the court. If we suppose one of these set apart as the station of the king at his coronation, the position would be admirably suited for the purpose. Otherwise we must understand some special erection in the court of the temple, of which there is no mention till this passage, and afterwards in chap. xxiii. 3. The situation of the pillar is described in 2 Chron. xxiii. 13 as 'at the entering in', words which would not unfitly describe the position of the two pillars erected in the temple porch.

as the manner was] Hence it was a well-known spot appropriated to such occasions.

and the princes and the trumpeters] R.V. **the captains and the trumpets.** The 'captains' were those 'over hundreds' mentioned before. 'Trumpets' of course implies 'trumpeters' but the word is literally translated in 2 Chron., and the two places should agree. The persons who blew with the trumpets were probably the Levites, for in chap. xii. 13, 'trumpets' are recounted as among the furniture of the temple, and these would be used only by priests or Levites. In 2 Chron. vii. 6; xiii. 14 we have the priests sounding trumpets.

and all the people of the land rejoiced] Shewing that there was a numerous convocation. The gathering would be larger than usual because the Sabbath had been chosen for these operations.

and [R.V. **Then**] *Athaliah rent her clothes*] Seeing with horror that priests and soldiery and the assembled people were all of one mind, and against her.

15. *But* [R.V. **And**] *Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the* [R.V. omits *the*] *hundreds, the officers of the host*] R.V. **that were set over the host.** The changes bring the version into close agreement with 2 Chron. By the 'host' is meant the combined body who had been gathered by Jehoiada, and put under the direction of the five captains.

Have her forth without the ranges] R.V. **between the ranks.** That the meaning is 'within' and not 'without' the ranks is manifest from Lev. xvi. 15 where the same prepositional form is found and cannot be otherwise translated than 'within'. The object of Jehoiada's order is plain. He would keep Athaliah surrounded by his own guards, but get her removed beyond the precincts of the temple. This harmonizes with the order recorded at the end of this verse, that she should not be slain in the house of the Lord.

and him that followeth her kill [R.V. **slay**] *with the sword*] The verb is the same as in the next clause. The persons who might perhaps be expected to follow her, when she was led away guarded from the

sword. For the priest had said, Let her not be slain *in* the house of the LORD. And they laid hands on her; and she 16
went *by* the way by the which the horses came *into* the king's house: and there was she slain.

And Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and 17
the king and the people, that *they* should be the LORD'S people; between the king also and the people. And all the 18
people of the land went *into* the house of Baal, and brake it

temple, would be those of her own attendants, who had not been allowed to come between the lines of the guard, yet now might think it their duty to try and rescue their mistress.

16. *And they laid hands on her*] R.V. **So they made way for her.** The rendering of the A.V. agrees with the LXX. and the Vulgate. But the verb here used is not that employed for such an act as the arrest here described would be. It is better therefore to adopt the translation of the Targum followed by Jewish and many modern commentators, 'They gave room to her on both hands'. Literally the words mean, 'they arranged for her two sides', thus making a space between which she could walk.

by *the way by the which the horses came* into *the king's house*] R.V. **by the way of the horses' entry to the king's house.** This is not to be confounded with the 'horse gate' of Jerusalem, spoken of Neh. iii. 28. That was a gate of the city, not of the king's palace. The way here spoken of was a private road to the king's house.

there was she slain] No doubt according to the orders of Jehoiada.

17—21. JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF GOD. THE HOUSE OF BAAL IS DESTROYED. JOASH IS BROUGHT TO THE PALACE AND ENTHRONED. (2 Chron. xxiii. 16—xxiv. 1.)

17. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord*] In 2 Chron. 'Jehoiada' stands in the place of Jehovah, and it is said he made a covenant between *himself* and all the people and the king. Of course in the whole transaction he would appear as the representative of Jehovah, and receive in the name of the Lord the promise of both king and people, by which they dedicated themselves to the Lord.

between the king also and the people] i.e. that they should be loyal subjects and he a just ruler over them.

18. *went* into [R.V. to] *the house of Baal*] Athaliah had set up Baal worship in Judah after the fashion of the northern kingdom. We are told also in 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 that the sons of Athaliah had broken up (i.e. broken into) the house of God, and bestowed the dedicated things of the house of the Lord upon the Baalim. It is clear from this that the house of Baal was not any portion of the temple which had been appropriated to the idolatrous worship, but a separate building, into which spoils from the temple had been conveyed. It may have been on the same hill with the temple, though of that we cannot be

down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces throughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And the priest appointed officers over the house of
19 the LORD. And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard, and all the people of the land; and they brought down the king from the house of the LORD, and came *by* the way of the gate of the guard *to* the king's
20 house. And he sat on the throne of the kings. And all

certain. There can however be no doubt that the Baal worship had not extended largely in Judah. Hence the readiness of the people of the land, called to Jerusalem by some festival, to go to the Baalite edifice and destroy it.

brake they in pieces throughly] That there should be no chance of a restoration. The multitude were no doubt helped in their destruction by the military force with which, in these doings, they had been in such close combination.

Mattan the priest of Baal] We read of no other priest of Baal in Judah, and so we may conclude that though the court favoured idolatry, it found no great favour with the rest of the kingdom. Otherwise we should have heard of an array of priests like that of Jezebel in Samaria.

And the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord] From this necessity we may gather that the regular ministrations in the temple had been interfered with by the introduction of the Baalim. The Chronicler gives fuller details on this matter, and the two accounts have so much verbal similarity in other parts that we cannot avoid the conclusion that both writers used a common source of information. He says (2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19) 'Jehoiada appointed the offices of the house of the Lord by the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had distributed in the house of the Lord, to offer the burnt offerings of the Lord, as it is written in the law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was ordained by* David. And he set the porters at the gates of the house of the Lord that none which was unclean in any thing should enter in'.

19. *And he took the rulers* [R.V. **captains**] *and the captains*] R.V. **the Carites**. On these words cf. above on verse 4.

and they brought down the king] The movement was a popular one, the people taking part with the soldiers and the priests. In 2 Chron. 'the nobles and the governors of the people' are included in the list. The temple was on a lofty height. Hence the phrase 'brought down'.

by *the way of the gate of the guard* to [R.V. **unto**] *the king's house*] This gate would be specially ready for the king's entry, as it was one of those secured by the arrangements described in verse 6.

he sat on the throne of the kings] On this throne, and its position in the palace which Solomon built, cf. note on 1 Kings vii. 7.

20. *And* [R.V. **So**] *all the people of the land rejoiced*] The attachment of Judah to the family of David had always been very great, and to see a son of that family on the throne, even though some of his

the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was in quiet: and they slew Athaliah with the sword *beside* the king's house. Seven years old *was* Jehoash when he *began* to reign. 21

In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash *began* to reign; and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beer-sheba. And Jehoash did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD all his days where*in* Jehoiada the priest instructed him. But the high places were not taken away: the people still sacrificed and burnt 12 2 3

blood was of Ahab's house, was far more to the mind of the people than to be ruled over by a daughter of Ahab.

and the city was in quiet] R.V. omits *in*, as is done in the parallel verse in 2 Chron. Cf. for the expression, the phrase so frequently recurring in Judges, 'the land had rest' (iii. 30; v. 31; &c.).

beside [R.V. **at**] *the king's house*] There is no preposition in the original as the italics of A.V. indicate; the noun is an accusative of place. Hence the 'at' of R.V. is warranted.

On the death of Athaliah Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 7. 3) says, 'Jehoiada having called the captains ordered them to take Athaliah into the valley of Kidron and there to kill her'. In xxv. 4 (see note there) we find that 'the king's garden' was very near to the Kidron valley. It may be therefore that the place indicated here 'beside (at) the king's house' was not far from the 'king's garden' spoken of there.

21. *Seven years old* was *Jehoash*] R.V. **Jehoash was seven years old.** This is the arrangement of the words in 2 Chron. Joash and Jehoash are duplicate forms of the same kind as have been noticed above on x. 15. The shorter form is used by the Chronicler, and is found presently below in xii. 19, 20.

CH. XII. **1—16.** JOASH REIGNS WELL BUT THE HIGH PLACES ARE NOT REMOVED. THE HOUSE OF THE LORD IS RESTORED. (2 Chronicles xxiv. 1—14.)

1. *Jehoash* began *to reign, and forty years reigned he in Jerusalem*] The R.V. puts the words into the usual order in these recitals, by placing 'began' before 'Jehoash' and 'he reigned' before 'forty years'.

2. *all his days*] In the original there is a division here in the verse, and the pronoun which both A.V. and R.V. render 'wherein' should, as the text stands, be translated 'because'. This statement that Jehoash did what was right *all his days* is opposed to the narrative in Chronicles. The LXX. appears not to have had 'his' in connexion with 'days', for the rendering is 'he did what was right all the days during which Jehoiada instructed him'. The necessity for being consistent with Chronicles has led to the rendering of the relative by 'wherein'.

3. *But* [R.V. **Howbeit**] *the high places were not taken away*] Worship having been permitted there before the temple was erected, it was

4 incense in the high places. And Jehoash said to the priests, All the money of the dedicated *things* that is brought *into* the house of the LORD, *even* the money of every one that passeth *the account*, the money that every man is set at, *and* all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring

difficult to draw the people away from them, as they would be nearer at hand than the one place set apart for sacrifice, viz. Jerusalem, and they would also have acquired a degree of consecration from long use.

4. *And Jehoash said to the priests*] Even if we had not the definite statement which stands 2 Chron. xxiv. 7 of the depredations made on the temple by the sons of Athaliah, we can understand how under her rule the temple would be neglected and allowed to get out of repair. Hence the need which Jehoash recognised. It must have been some years after his accession when he gave these orders to the priests. At seven years old he would not be sensible of what was needed in such a matter.

All the money of the dedicated [R.V. **hallowed**] things] The change is to the rendering of the same word in verse 18 of this chapter. The money here spoken of is that which was given for the provision of vessels and implements for temple-service. Cf. 1 Kings vii. 51 and the verses preceding.

even *the money of every one that passeth* the account] R.V. **in current money.** The R.V. is supported by the rendering of A.V. in Gen. xxiii. 16 where the same participle is used as in this verse. We are not however to understand by 'current', money that was coined, which neither in Abraham's time nor in Joash's was in use among the Jews. They employed pieces of silver of varying weight, and the weighing was the mode of estimating its value. The translation of A.V. makes the word refer to the numbering which is described in Exod. xxx. 12, where the Israelites are directed to pay half a shekel each, as redemption money, on attaining the age of twenty years.

the money that every man is set at] R.V. **the money of the persons for whom each man is rated.** The literal rendering of the Hebrew is 'each man the money of the souls of his estimation'. The allusion is to such vows, and the assessments connected with them, as are described in Lev. xxvii. 2—8, in the case of those who made special singular vows, e.g. of a Nazirite.

the money that cometh [R.V. **that it cometh**] *into any man's heart to bring*] These were freewill offerings. Of the nature and occasions of such freewill offerings cf. Lev. xxii. 18—23; Deut. xvi. 10, with the parallel passages.

There are three kinds of offerings mentioned in the verse. (1) Current money offered for the provision of vessels and other things required for the temple. (2) The money which the priests were instructed to assess on those who had bound themselves by vows. (3) Voluntary gifts of which the appropriation was not prescribed. The offerings are said in Chronicles to be such as had been prescribed by Moses and by the congregation of Israel for the tabernacle of witness.

into the house of the LORD, let the priests take *it* to them, every man of his acquaintance: and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found. But it was *so, that* in the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house. Then king Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the *other* priests, and said unto them, Why repair ye not the breaches of the house? now therefore receive no

5. *let the priests take* it *to them, every man of his acquaintance*] This passage is not easy to understand until we have along with it the parallel account of the Chronicler. From 2 Kings it might be thought that the words of Jehoash applied to such offerings as were made at the temple, and then it would be hard to see what a man's acquaintance had to do with such a matter. But in 2 Chron. we are told that the priests and Levites were bidden 'to go out unto the cities of Judah and gather money of all Israel'. Hence nothing was more natural than that each should go among the people to whom he was best known, and from whom he would have the best chance of bringing in contributions. Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 8. 12) says that 'the priests and Levites were sent through the whole land to ask *half a shekel from each person* for the furniture and restoration of the temple, which had been broken up by Joram and Athaliah and her sons'.

and let them repair] R.V. **they shall repair.** This is literal, and besides allows more emphasis to be given to the pronoun 'they' which is placed in a marked position in the original. The wish of the king at first was to put the whole matter in the charge of the priest.

the breaches] The Hebrew word, which the LXX. merely transliterates (βεδέκ), is found only in this chapter and xxii. 5, and in Ezek. xxvii. 9, 27. But in the last-mentioned passages it is used of the filling up, by calking, of the chinks in ships. Hence we can understand the sort of decay which had taken place in the temple-building. Years of neglect had allowed the walls to crumble and crack and similar damages to arise in every part.

6. *In the three and twentieth year of king Jehoash*] By which time he must have attained the age of thirty and was able to act with decision. According to the Chronicler the first order had been, 'See that ye hasten the matter. Howbeit the Levites hastened it not'. That account also makes Jehoiada more personally responsible than he is here represented to have been. 'The king called for Jehoiada the chief, and said unto him, Why hast thou not required of the Levites to bring in out of Judah and out of Jerusalem the collection?'

the priests had not repaired the breaches] We are not told why this was so, though the king asked the question. They had evidently been receiving the money, for the king's order in the next verse is 'Take no more money'.

7. *Why repair ye not the breaches?*] No answer is given to this question either here or in 2 Chronicles. There can be no doubt that with

more money of your acquaintance, but deliver it for the
8 breaches of the house. And the priests consented to receive
no *more* money of the people, neither to repair the breaches
9 of the house. But Jehoiada the priest took a chest, and
bored a hole in the lid of it, and set it beside the altar, on the
right side as one cometh *into* the house of the LORD: and
the priests that kept the door put therein all the money that
10 was brought *into* the house of the LORD. And it was *so*,

the decay of the house of the Lord, the decrease of the offerings had also taken place. The priests and Levites had perhaps found much difficulty in increasing the sums collected, and in apportioning what they received between their own maintenance and the restoration-fund. There seems to have been no blame attached to them by the king, and the explanation they offered, whatever it may have been, was so far satisfactory that the priests which kept the door of the house were placed in charge of the box that was provided for the offerings.

now therefore receive [R.V. **take**] *no* more *money*] The collection which had at first been ordered (2 Chron. xxiv. 5) was now to cease. There was to be no going round to gather, but public offerings were to be made beside the altar when the worshippers came to Jerusalem. This seems to be the true principle, and calculated in all cases to stimulate bounty towards good works.

8. *the priests consented to receive no* more *money...neither to repair*] R.V. **that they should take no more money...neither repair.** They had clearly found the work beyond them, and were glad to be relieved both of the collection and the laying out of the fund. This consent of theirs is not alluded to by the Chronicler.

9. *But Jehoiada the priest took a chest*] The Chronicler says 'At the king's commandment they made a chest'. It is manifest that both king and priests were at one in changing the plan for raising a repair-fund. But it is not without interest to note that the narrative of Chronicles, which is assumed to bring the priest into prominence everywhere, here omits Jehoiada's name from the story.

set it beside the altar] In Chronicles it is said to have been 'set without at the gate of the house of the Lord'. The altar spoken of here is the brasen altar for burnt offerings which was outside the temple, in the court, before the porch of the temple. So the description in Chronicles appears to be a little less exact than in the verse before us. But the words which are added here 'on the right side as one cometh into the house of the Lord' may have given rise to the Chronicler's more vague description 'at the gate of the house of the Lord'. The account in Kings is to be preferred as drawn from some contemporary record and compiled earlier than the narrative in Chronicles.

all the money that was brought] In 2 Chron. xxiv. 9, 10 we are told that when the chest was set 'they made a proclamation through Judah and Jerusalem to bring in to the Lord the collection that Moses, the servant of God, laid upon Israel in the wilderness. And all the princes

when they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's scribe and the high priest came up, and they put up *in bags*, and told the money that was found *in* the house of the LORD. And they gave the money, being told, 11

and all the people rejoiced, and brought in, and cast into the chest, until they had made an end'. While the money had been given by individuals at their homes, and with no united action, the preparations had languished. The new arrangement put life into the work. The givers saw that others were giving as well as they, and found that a sum was being gathered of which regular account was kept, so that there was now some hope that the work would be completed. Josephus exactly hits the feeling which would be created in this way when he says πολὺν ἄργυρον καὶ χρυσὸν φιλοτιμούμενοι καὶ συνεισφέροντες ἤθροισαν. The spirit of cooperation was invoked and the contributors saw that success was likely to attend what they were doing. Hence their zealous efforts. The history is not without its value in our own days.

10. *when they saw that* there was *much money in the chest*] They could tell this by lifting, and beside this the priests were eye-witnesses of the liberal contribution.

the king's scribe] This was the royal secretary, through whom the king would be kept acquainted with the progress of the fund. It appears from 2 Chron. xxiv. 11 that the chest was carried unopened unto the king's office by the Levites, and that the examination and disposal of the contents took place there.

the high priest] The Chronicler says 'the high priest's officer'. Josephus says the king was present at the opening. What is meant by these varying statements is that these two were always represented and that now and then no doubt both king and high priest were there in person.

came up] To the place whither the chest had been brought for examination and to be emptied.

put up in bags] The literal meaning 'bound up' is given on the margins of A.V. and R.V. The verb is used of putting money together in a packet (Deut. xiv. 25). We must understand the proceeding to be in connexion with uncoined gold and silver. First it was tied up in some way into parcels, and then by weighing its value was found.

and told the money] i.e. As we should now say 'counted' it. But the total value was found by weighing. The old use of 'tell' for 'count' occurs several times in the O.T. 'Cf. Ps. cxlvii. 4 'He *telleth* the number of the stars'. So Jer. xxxiii. 13, 'The flocks pass under the hands of him that *telleth them*'. Compare Milton, *L'Allegro* 67,

'And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale'.

i.e. he counts the number of his sheep to see that none have been lost during the night.

11. *they gave the money, being told*] R.V. that was weighed out. Here by employing a different word the writer makes plain what was

into the hands of *them* that did the work, that had the oversight *of* the house of the LORD: and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders, that wrought upon the house of the
12 LORD, and to masons, and hewers of stone, and to buy timber and hewed stone to repair the breaches of the house of the LORD, and for all that was laid out for the house to
13 repair *it*. Howbeit there were not made *for* the house of the LORD bowls of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver, of the money that
14 was brought *into* the house of the LORD: but they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the

meant by the previous 'telling' or 'counting'. The Chronicler adds that when this was done, the chest was carried back to its place, and that they did this from day to day, i.e. from time to time, and gathered money in abundance.

into the hands of them *that did the work*] Explained by the following clause as 'the overseers', the chief men who had charge of the restoration. The priests and the king's officer did not pay the workmen, but gave sums in gross over to the contractors.

and they laid [R.V. **paid**] *it out to the carpenters and* [R.V. **and the**] *builders*] Both nouns are defined, as are also '**the** masons and **the** hewers of stone' in the next verse. R.V. inserts the article there also.

12. *and to buy timber and hewed stone*] R.V. **And for buying timber and hewn stone.** The whole passage thus becomes, as the Hebrew makes it, dependent on the previous verb 'they paid it out', so that the overseers are represented as paying all wages and buying all materials.

13. *Howbeit* [R.V. **But**] *there were not made* for *the house of the Lord*] The compiler of Kings makes mention of certain vessels and implements which *were not made* at this time and from these contributions. Such were cups of silver, snuffers, basons, trumpets, and vessels of gold or vessels of silver, &c. as here recited. The Chronicler on the other hand dwells on such things as *were made*, and his list comprises 'vessels to minister and to offer withal, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver'. The one it will be seen says that vessels of gold and silver *were made*, the other that vessels of gold and silver *were not made*. But both writers are referring to the class of articles they have mentioned before. So of gold and silver there *were not made* cups, snuffers, basons &c., but vessels for ministration and spoons *were made*. They do not necessarily contradict each other.

bowls [R.V. **cups**] *of silver*] An attempt has been made in R.V., to give the same renderings to the same words in the enumeration of vessels for the temple. Hence the change here and 1 Kings vii. 50 and Jer. lii. 19. The Hebrew word is rendered 'cup' in Zech. xii. 2 by A.V., and on the margin of 2 Sam. xvii. 28. The word very frequently signifies 'a threshold'. Hence the LXX. here has θύραι = doors.

14. *but* [R.V. **For**] *they gave that to the workmen*] R.V. **to them**

LORD. Moreover they reckoned not with the men, into 15
whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on
workmen: for they dealt faithfully. The trespass money 16
and sin money was not brought *into* the house of the LORD:
it was the priests'.

Then Hazael king of Syria went up, and fought against 17
Gath, and took it: and Hazael set his face to go up to
Jerusalem. And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hal- 18

that did the work. The Hebrew expression is the same as in verse 11, and signifies the overseers, not the craftsmen.

15. *the men into whose hand they delivered*] This must refer to certain treasurers into whose care each new chest full of offerings was entrusted. These were selected at first as being men who were sure to deal uprightly, and to them, without demanding any account, all was given over, and through their hands it was passed on to the overseers and contractors, and thus distributed to the workmen.

to be bestowed on workmen] R.V. **to give to them that did the work.** The same expression and with the same signification as in verses 11 and 14.

16. *The trespass money*] R.V. **The money for the guilt offerings.** 'Guilt offering' was adopted by R.V. in Lev. v. 1—6 and throughout the law for the 'trespass-offering' of A.V., to accord with the verb and the adjective which are rendered in that leading passage 'to be guilty' and 'guilty'. 'Trespass money' occurs nowhere else but in this verse.

sin money] R.V. **the money for the sin-offering.** On this see Lev. v. 7—12. 'Sin money' is found nowhere else.

it was the priests'] See Lev. xiv. 13. 'For as the sin-offering is the priest's, so is the trespass (R.V. **guilt**) offering'.

17—21. HAZAEL THREATENS TO ATTACK JERUSALEM, BUT IS BOUGHT OFF BY JEHOASH. A CONSPIRACY IS FORMED AGAINST JEHOASH, AND HE IS MURDERED. (2 Chron. xxiv. 23—27.)

17. *Hazael*] See chap. viii. 8.

fought against Gath] Gath was one of the five great cities of the Philistines, though it is not clear whether at this time it was in the hands of Judah or of the Philistines. It lay almost directly west between Jerusalem and the Mediterranean. Before he came to Gath, Hazael must have made his way through the northern kingdom of Israel.

Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem] It is needful to mention here those events in the history of Judah which the Chronicler records before the story of the Syrian invasion, but which are not noticed in 2 Kings. Jehoiada the high priest died at the age of 130, and was buried with great honour among the kings of Judah. After that Jehoash, following the persuasions of the princes of Judah, fell away into idolatry, and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem. God sent them prophets

lowed *things* that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicate, and his own hallowed *things*, and all the gold that was found in the treasures of the house of the LORD, and *in* the king's house, and sent *it* to Hazael king of Syria: and he went away from Jeru-
19 salem. And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of
20 the kings of Judah? And his servants arose, and made a

but they gave no ear. Among others Zechariah the son of Jehoiada rebuked both king and people for their transgressions, and at the king's commandment the people stoned him to death in the court of the house of the Lord. So Jehoash slew the son of his benefactor, and Zechariah when dying appealed to God against his countrymen and their king, saying, 'The Lord look upon it and require it'. The Syrian expedition is evidently regarded by the Chronicler as a visitation from God for these sins of the land. But he gives us also some details which are required for the understanding of 2 Kings. It seems strange when we read here that Jehoash made the large sacrifices described in the next verse because Hazael had merely set his face (i.e. formed the design) to go up to Jerusalem. But when this is supplemented by the statement (2 Chron. xxiv. 23, 24) that the host of Syria had come to Judah and Jerusalem, and had destroyed all the princes of the people, and had sent the spoil to the king of Damascus (i.e. Hazael), and also that a very great host of Judah had been conquered by a small company of Syrians, we are at no loss to understand the sacrifices which Jehoash made to buy off so formidable an enemy.

18. *hallowed* things] See above on verse 4.

kings of Judah had dedicate] No doubt there were occasions in almost every reign when the king was able to give from his conquests some gift as a thankoffering to God for success. Hence the sacred treasures would come to be of great value.

and he went away from Jerusalem] Since Hazael is not mentioned by the Chronicler as present in this expedition, and the spoils are described as being sent away to him, we may conclude that what he is here said to have done was done by the hosts of Syria which he sent forth. In Chronicles, though nothing is said there about the way in which Jehoash bribed the Syrians to depart, we learn that for some reason or other they did depart without prosecuting the siege of Jerusalem.

19. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Joash*] Here and in the next verse the shorter form of the king's name is introduced. Some of the acts of Joash have been noticed above on verse 17. The compiler of Kings seems to have thought it unnecessary to mention anything but the way in which the true heir was restored to the throne, and how in his days the temple was restored, the family of David and the service of Jehovah taking as it were new root at this time.

20. *And his servants arose*] The Chronicler tells us that the Syrians left the king suffering from 'great diseases', perhaps from wounds

conspiracy, and slew Joash *in* the house of Millo, which goeth down *to* Silla. For Jozachar the son of Shimeath, 21
and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants, smote him, and he died; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead.

received in some battle against the Syrians. He adds also that it was because of the blood 'of the *sons* of Jehoiada' that the conspiracy was formed against Joash. From which it would seem that not Zechariah only but the whole family of Jehoiada had been put to death by the ungrateful king.

slew Joash in *the house of Millo*] R.V. **smote Joash at** &c. We see from 2 Chronicles that the king was lying sick at this place. So it probably was some royal residence, or some part thereof. On 'Millo', the name of some part of the fortifications of Jerusalem, cf. 1 Kings ix. 15. Perhaps the place indicated in this verse may have been part of that fortress. The 'house of Millo' is mentioned before this, in Judges ix. 6, but that passage has no connexion with this. The Hebrew 'Beth-Millo', translated 'house of Millo', may have been one proper name which we ought to retain without translation, as in so many other words formed with 'Beth' as a prefix.

which goeth down to *Silla*] R.V. on the way **that goeth down to Silla**. The LXX. and other versions take 'Silla' as a proper name, but we have no knowledge of it except from this place.

21. *For Jozachar* [R.V. **Jozacar**] *the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad the son of Shomer*] In 2 Chron. the names of the conspirators are given as 'Zabad the son of Shimeath an Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of Shemrith a Moabitess'. Between זבד Zabad and זכר Zacar, the abbreviated form of Jozacar, it is easy to see how a mistake might arise from the similarity of the Hebrew letters. The Chronicler who mentions the nationality of the mothers gives their names both in the feminine form. In Kings the last two letters from שִׁמְרִית (Shemrith) have fallen out and so the name has become שִׁמְר (Shomer). Although these names are without doubt historical it is very remarkable (as Thenius points out) how when they are translated they recall Zechariah's last words 'The Lord look upon it and require it'. For they signify '*Jehovah-remembers*', the son of '*Hearer*'; and '*Jehovah-gives*', the son of '*Watcher*'.

and they buried him with his fathers] i.e. In the city of David, but as the Chronicler records, not in the sepulchres of the kings. The words of the Chronicler about the 'greatness of the burdens' laid upon Jehoash refer to the many prophetic oracles which were uttered against him in consequence of his evil deeds. Cf. for that sense of the word 'burden' Is. xiii. 1, and many other passages of that prophet. On the margin R.V. in such cases, gives 'oracle concerning'.

and Amaziah his son] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxiv. 27) speaks of the '*sons* of Jehoash'; we know nothing however of any son but

13 In the three and twentieth year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah Jehoahaz the son of Jehu *began* to reign
2 over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made
3 Israel to sin; he departed not therefrom. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the
4 hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. And

Amaziah, though it is said (2 Chron. xxiv. 3) 'Jehoiada took for Jehoash two wives, and he begat sons and daughters'.

CH. XIII. 1—9. REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ, SON OF JEHU, OVER ISRAEL. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *In the three-and-twentieth year of Joash...king of Judah, Jehoahaz* ...began *to reign*] The chronology here seems inconsistent with verse 10. Jehoahaz's seventeen years, according to the statement before us, would go on to the *fortieth* year of Joash king of Judah, whereas the successor of Jehoahaz is stated in verse 10 to have begun his reign in the *thirty-seventh* year of Joash. It is possible that seventeen years, according to Jewish reckoning, may really have been very little more than fifteen. Still that does not bring the dates into accord. Where the mistake may be is not easy to discover. The LXX. represents the same numbers, which it is clear cannot all be correct, though the error is not large. See Chronological Table in the Introduction.

Jehoahaz the son of Jehu] The first of the four generations for which God promised that the line of Jehu should continue.

2. *which made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made**, &c. As usual. The same change is needed below in verses 6 and 11 of this chapter. We must understand the language of this verse as referring not only to the days of Jehoahaz, but to those of his father Jehu, at least so far as the delivery of Israel into the hand of Hazael is concerned. For in x. 32 we have already been told that in the time of Jehu 'the Lord began to cut Israel short, and Hazael smote them'. What the writer here wishes to represent is that in spite of the calamities which befel the nation from Hazael in the previous reign, the son was no better than his father, and so 'the Lord's anger was kindled'; He sent severer punishments on those whom His warnings had not moved, and Hazael not only inflicted blows on the power of Israel, but made them still more subject to him.

3. *all* their *days*] R.V. **continually**. The sense cannot be what is represented by A.V. For in the days of Benhadad (2 Kings xiii. 25) the son of Jehoahaz made conquests from Benhadad. Hence 'all the days' must mean the days of Jehoahaz, which accords with the statement of verse 22 below. So 'continually' must refer to the whole of this reign.

Jehoahaz besought the LORD, and the LORD hearkened unto him: for he saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. (And the LORD gave Israel a 5 saviour, so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians: and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents, as beforetime. Nevertheless they departed not from the sins 6 of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel sin, *but* walked therein: and there remained the grove also in Samaria.)

4. *Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him*] Just as in the case of punishment God does not always visit at once, even though an Ahab have sold himself to work wickedness, so in the case of mercy, the intervention of Jehovah is postponed to another generation. The Syrians are allowed to oppress Israel all the days of Jehoahaz, though we are told that his prayer had been heard. In the days of Jehoash, the next successor, some alleviation was afforded by the victories of that king over Benhadad (xiii. 25), but it was not, as it seems, till the following generation that the full answer to the prayer came.

5. *And the Lord gave Israel a saviour*] The LXX. has σωτηρίαν 'salvation', 'deliverance'. The two verses 5 and 6 are a parenthesis, and interrupt the connexion. The '*saviour*' alludes to what is said of Jeroboam II. (xiv. 27). 'The Lord *saved* Israel by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash'. This was the time when the prayer of Jehoahaz was truly answered, in the reign of his grandson. That passage is connected with this also by the language of the preceding verse (26) 'The Lord *saw the affliction of Israel*, that it was bitter'.

so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians] Language like this must refer to some very great change in the relative positions of Syria and Israel. We have some indication of it in the statement (xiv. 28) that Jeroboam recovered Damascus for Israel. By such a reverse the power of Syria must have been severely broken. We learn from the cuneiform inscriptions (1 Rawl. 35) that Damascus was about this time made subject to Assyria (Schrader p. 110; Eng. Trans. vol. I. 203). It may be therefore that by the help of Assyria (which we have seen that Israel sometimes gained at the expense of liberty) the kings of Israel were able to shake off the thraldom of their nearer, and therefore more galling, oppressor, at first partially, then completely, so as to come from under his hand.

the children of Israel dwelt in their tents] The expression may refer to the peaceful state when the dwellers in the country could live safely out amid their flocks and crops, and not be constrained by the pressure of war to seek refuge in the towns. But it has been noted (see on 1 Kings viii. 66) that 'tents' is used for 'homes'. Hence the words of this verse may mean only that the people lived quietly at home, and were not constantly called forth to resist the inroads of the Syrians.

6. *and there remained the grove* [R.V. **Asherah**] *also in Samaria*] On Asherah, by which is probably meant a wooden image of a goddess

7 Neither did he leave *of* the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen, and ten chariots, and ten thousand footmen; for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them
8 like the dust by threshing. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?
9 And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in Samaria: and Joash his son reigned in his stead.
10 In the thirty and seventh year of Joash king of Judah

worshipped with similar rites to those of the god Baal, see note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. Jehu had not eliminated all that belonged to the Tyrian idolatry, and his successors were no more earnest to do so than himself.

7. *Neither did he leave* of *the people to Jehoahaz but fifty horsemen*] R.V. **For he left not to Jehoahaz of the people save fifty horsemen.** Not only does R.V. render the original here more exactly, but it indicates clearly where the parenthesis of the last two verses comes to an end. We have here the continuation of verse 4, and a picture of the character and extent of the Syrian oppression. When we call to mind that in David's times (2 Sam. xxiv. 9) the warriors of Israel were eight hundred thousand men, we can form some idea of the way in which Israel was now 'cut short'.

the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them] The R.V. omits '**had**' in both places. This is right, for the description refers to the time of Jehoahaz. Whether the destruction here mentioned was by making them slaves or by extermination, we cannot tell, but it is much the most probable that a warlike people like the Syrians would take soldiers prisoners and use them in their wars with Assyria and elsewhere.

like the dust by threshing] R.V. **in threshing**. The correct sense is given on the margin of R.V. 'dust to trample on'. The Oriental manner of threshing is by the trampling of oxen's feet, and the figure is used to signify the utter prostration of Israel. The LXX. also has the right idea, giving *εἰς καταπάτησιν*. For the word used thus of trampling under foot cf. Isaiah xxv. 10 'Moab shall be *trodden down* under him even as straw is *trodden down*', where the margin gives twice over 'threshed'. The reference in the margin of A.V. to Amos i. 3 where the cruelties of Damascus are described, 'they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron', probably does not apply to the account before us. All that is here meant is that Israel was utterly reduced and broken. The 'dust in threshing' of R.V. is an attempt to be literal and yet to avoid the implication of barbarity which is conveyed in A.V.

10—13. Reign of Jehoash king of Israel. (2 Chron. xxv. 17—24.)

10. *In the thirty and seventh year of Joash*] See above on verse 1.

began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. And he did *that* which 11
was evil in the sight of the LORD; he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin: *but* he walked therein. And the rest of the acts of 12
Joash, and all that he did, and his might where*with* he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Joash 13
slept with his fathers; and Jeroboam sat upon his throne: and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he 14
died. And Joash the king of Israel came down unto him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the

Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz] As in the case of Jehoash king of Judah (see xii. 2, 19, 20) so here the longer form, in the previous verse the shorter form of this name is written. This was the second of the four generations promised to Jehu.

12. *his might where*with *he fought against Amaziah king of Judah*] The story of Amaziah's challenge to Jehoash is told in xiv. 8—14 and in 2 Chron. xxv. He was proud of his victory over Edom, and sent to the king of Israel saying, 'Come let us see one another in the face', and, in spite of the wise message of Jehoash, would come forth to battle and was defeated at Beth-shemesh. After his victory the king of Israel broke down a part of the wall of Jerusalem, and carried away the treasures and vessels both from the house of the Lord and from the king's house.

13. *and Jeroboam sat upon his throne*] i.e. Jeroboam the second, who was the third generation of the family of Jehu. This form of words concerning a royal succession is unusual. We generally have 'reigned in his stead'. See below xiv. 16 for the usual form concerning this same king.

with the kings of Israel] Though Samaria was only built by Omri, Ahab's father, yet by this time it had become the favourite city and the burial-place of the royal family.

14—21. THE VISIT OF JOASH TO ELISHA ON HIS DEATHBED. ELISHA'S PREDICTION OF VICTORY OVER SYRIA. A DEAD BODY BROUGHT TO LIFE ON TOUCHING ELISHA'S BONES. (Not in Chronicles.)

14. *and wept over his face*] R.V. over him. 'Face' in Hebrew is constantly used for 'a person', and it seems more suitable to omit the very literal rendering here. For examples cf. Gen. xix. 21, 'I have accepted thee', margin 'thy face'; Gen. xliii. 34, 'He sent messes from before him', margin 'his face'.

It is manifest from this history that though Jehoash continued the

15 chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And Elisha said
unto him, Take bow and arrows. And he took unto him bow
16 and arrows. And he said to the king of Israel, Put thine
hand upon the bow. And he put his hand *upon it:* and
17 Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands. And he said,
Open the window eastward. And he opened *it.* Then
Elisha said, Shoot. And he shot. And he said, The arrow
of the LORD'S deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance
from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek, till

worship of the calves, the worship of Jehovah can have met with no opposition from him, and Jehovah's prophet was held in the highest esteem. Indeed the picture presented of the king leaving his palace to visit the house of the dying prophet, and weeping over the approaching loss which Israel was to suffer makes us wonder that Elisha's influence had not the effect of banishing the calves. The political significance of these objects must have been very great to have outweighed the counsels which we cannot doubt Elisha gave for their abolition.

O my father, my father] R.V. omits '*O*', which A.V. does not give in the corresponding passage ii. 12. Elisha's help had been so often given to Israel against their enemies, that the words seem to apply even better to him than to Elijah.

the chariot [R.V. **chariots**] *of Israel*] The word is meant to embrace the whole mounted host, the chariotry of the land. Hence the plural is the more correct rendering. See the note on ii. 12.

15. *Take bow and arrows*] It is as if the prophet by this significant action directed and encouraged the king to enter on the war against Syria.

16. *and Elisha put* [R.V. **laid**] *his hands upon the king's hands*] It will be seen from the marginal rendering of A.V. that the two verbs, both translated 'put', are not the same. Hence the need for change in the English. The first verb = *make thine hand to ride*, is expressive of the grasp of the archer. The action of the prophet in placing his feeble hands upon the king's is meant to be symbolic, and to extend, through the prophet, God's blessing to the undertaking which he has suggested.

17. *And he said, Open the window*] That there might be a free space for the arrow to be shot through. The command must be directed to some attendant, as the king was holding the bow ready to shoot when he was bidden. The windows of this time were merely open gratings, not filled with anything transparent.

eastward] Because eastward from Samaria lay the land of Gilead, the country on which the Syrians were so constantly making their attacks, and which they now had to a great degree in their possession.

The arrow of the Lord's deliverance] R.V. **The Lord's arrow of victory**. The R.V. represents more exactly the force of the Hebrew, which describes this arrow of victory as belonging to the Lord, i.e. as being specially directed by Him, and so assured of its result.

and the arrow of deliverance from Syria] R.V. **even the arrow of**

thou have consumed *them*. And he said, Take the arrows. 18
And he took *them*. And he said unto the king of Israel,
Smite upon the ground. And he smote thrice, and stayed.
And the man of God was wroth with him, and said, *Thou* 19
shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou
smitten Syria till *thou* hadst consumed *it:* whereas now thou
shalt smite Syria *but* thrice. And Elisha died, and they 20
buried him. And the bands of the Moabites invaded the

victory over Syria. The sentence is in apposition with the previous clause. The former looks to the prompter of the battle, the latter clause to the result.

in Aphek] This is probably the place of that name which was on the east of the sea of Galilee. See note on 1 Kings xx. 26. The region east of the Jordan was the constant battle-ground between Israel and Syria. See above on x. 32—33.

till thou *have consumed* them] This was the prophet's thought and the purport of his message. The lack of zeal in Joash by the giving of only three strokes when Elisha hoped for five or six, diminished the completeness of the victory which God had promised.

18. *Take the arrows*] By the previous symbolical act, the prophet has directed the king to go eastward with courage against the enemy, assured that the Lord will be with his arrows, and will regard them as His own. He now proceeds to test the zeal of Joash.

Smite upon the ground] The Hebrew indicates the *direction* of the blows 'towards the ground'. It appears as though the prophet wished blows to be aimed as if intended to strike down a foe. So the sense is equivalent to 'strike (some one) down to the ground'. It does not seem that there was to be any shooting of the arrows in this second figurative action, but only a series of blows made with them as they were grasped, and aimed at some imaginary enemy who was to be brought down.

And he smote thrice, and stayed] On 'stayed' in this sense of 'ceased' cf. on iv. 6 above. The act, which was intended to be an index of his earnestness, is very feebly performed, and so the promise is curtailed: 'now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice'.

19. *the man of God was wroth*] We must think of sorrow as well as anger. We can see through all Elisha's life, that the welfare of his country was very dear to him. Hence his desire that the king should accept God's announcement of victory with eagerness, and his grief that he did not.

20. *And* [R.V. Now] *the bands of the Moabites invaded the land*] If Elisha died in Samaria, and was buried in that neighbourhood, we must suppose Moab to have made great inroads upon Israel if the bands of plunderers could advance close to the royal city. Probably the great devastations of the Syrians on the east of Jordan (x. 32, 33) made it easier for the Moabites to cross the Jordan and to ravage the lands of Israel to the west of the river.

21 land *at* the coming in of the year. And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that behold, they spied a band *of men;* and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet.

at *the coming in of the year*] We can see from such passages as 2 Sam. xi. 1; 1 Kings xx. 22, 26; 1 Chron. xx. 1; 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, that there was a season of the year at which alone it was usual, and perhaps, on account of the climate, possible, for an army to take the field. The general expression is 'when the year was expired': but this is very much the same as 'at the coming in of another year'.

21. *as they were burying a man*] i.e. Some Israelites had brought a dead body to the burial-place. The body was carried on a bier, and was not enclosed in a coffin (cf. Luke vii. 12—14), so that when cast into the grave it would touch any other body which had been deposited there before. In the East the graves are usually excavated in the rock, and closed by a stone at the mouth. The bodies were laid there, but there was no covering them with earth as in burials among western nations.

behold they spied a band of men] The R.V. omits the italics. The band was a band of the marauding Moabites, at whose approach the Israelites were terrified, and so made all haste to dispose of the corpse they were carrying.

unto the sepulchre of Elisha] This must have been nearer at hand than the grave which they intended to use. The distance from which the Moabites were visible allowed the bearers to open the first grave they came to, and there to lay down their burden, but gave time for nothing more. Josephus says that it was *the robbers* who had killed a man and that *they* cast him into Elisha's grave (*Ant.* IX. 8. 6).

and when the man was let down and touched] R.V. **and as soon as the man touched.** It will be seen from the margin of R.V. that the Hebrew means 'and when the man went and touched'; a very unusual kind of expression, but which does not warrant the idea conveyed by the A.V. that the body was lowered into the tomb.

the bones of Elisha] We need not press the literal sense of 'bones', as though a long time had elapsed since Elisha died. The lying prophet of Bethel (1 Kings xiii. 31), speaking of his own death and burial, says 'Lay my *bones* beside his *bones*'.

he revived and stood up on his feet] The record of this miracle seems intended to set forth that it was nothing in the prophet himself which had given him the great powers he manifested in his lifetime. Through his dead body God could work a miracle also. 'Israel shall well see that He lives, by whose virtue Elisha was, both in life and death, miraculous. While the prophet was alive, the impetration might seem to be his, though the power were God's; now that he is dead, the bones can challenge nothing, but send the wandering Israelites to that Almighty agent to whom it is all one to work by the quick or dead.' (Bp. Hall.)

But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of 22
Jehoahaz. And the LORD was gracious unto them, and had 23
compassion on them, and had respect unto them, because
of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would
not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as
yet. So Hazael king of Syria died; and Ben-hadad his son 24
reigned in his stead. And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took 25
again out of the hand of Ben-hadad the son of Hazael the
cities, which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his
father by war. Three times did Joash beat him, and re-
covered the cities of Israel.

22—25. HAZAEL'S OPPRESSION OF ISRAEL. GOD HAS COMPASSION ON THEM. THE VICTORIES OF JEHOASH OVER BEN-HADAD. (Not in Chronicles.)

22. *But* [R.V. **And**] *Hazael...oppressed Israel*] In these four verses we have a recapitulation of the attitude of Syria toward the Israelites in the two reigns of Jehoahaz and his son. The oppression lasted all the days of the former king, but yet, as in answer to his prayer (verse 4), Israel was not allowed to be destroyed. In the next reign came a greater relief.

23. *And* [R.V. **But**] *the Lord was gracious unto them*] Cf. for the sentiment, Malachi iii. 6, 'I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.'

as yet] The writer of Kings was living at the time of the captivity. He therefore knew that the grace and compassion had been shewn in vain, and that the kingdom of Israel had at last been utterly destroyed.

24. *Ben-hadad his son*] Hazael has given to his son the name which had previously been common in the Syrian royal family. This is the third Ben-hadad on the throne of Damascus. (Cf. Schrader, p. 109.) Nothing is known of him from the inscriptions.

25. *And Jehoash...took again...the cities*] Ben-hadad must have been a very different monarch from his father. The fifty horsemen and ten chariots and ten thousand footmen (verse 7) must have been allowed to increase very rapidly to effect so complete a change in the relations between Syria and Israel as is here represented. We are forced to think again of Assyrian help to Israel before we can realize the altered state of things.

Three times did Joash beat [R.V. **smite**] *him*] The history is introduced that the prophecy of Elisha may be pointed out as fulfilled. By these three victories Syria must have been driven from the west side of the Jordan, the land which had been conquered by Hazael in the reign of Jehoahaz. The eastern side of Jordan was already in the hand of Syria before Jehoahaz came to the throne. It had been conquered by Hazael in the days of Jehu (x. 32, 33).

14 In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel
2 reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah. He was
twenty and five years old when he *began* to reign, and reigned
twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
3 name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which
was right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like David his
father: he did according to all *things* as Joash his father did.
4 Howbeit the high places were not taken away: as yet the
people did sacrifice and burnt incense on the high places.
5 And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was confirmed
in his hand, that he slew his servants which had slain the
6 king his father. But the children of the murderers he slew
not: according unto that which is written in the book of the

CH. XIV. 1—7. REIGN OF AMAZIAH, KING OF JUDAH. HE SLAYS HIS FATHER'S MURDERERS. HIS VICTORY OVER THE EDOMITES. (2 Chron. xxv. 1—4.)

1. *In the second year of Joash...king of Israel*] See above on xiii. 1.

Joash son of Jehoahaz] R.V. **Joahaz.** This variation of the orthography is in the Hebrew.

reigned Amaziah...king of Judah] R.V. **began Amaziah...king of Judah to reign.** In verse 23 of this chapter the A.V. renders the same form of the verb (as is often done) by 'began to reign'.

2. *He was twenty and five years old*] His father Joash died at about 47 years of age. So Amaziah was born when his father was twenty-two.

his mother's name was Jehoaddan] R.V. **Jehoaddin.** The R.V. follows the *Kethib*. The A.V. has the same form as in 2 Chron. The LXX. gives Ἰωαδίμ, and Josephus Ἰωδαδῆ.

3. *yet not like David his father*] The Chronicler merely gives 'but not with a perfect heart', making no mention of Amaziah's resemblance to Joash, nor of his falling short of David.

according to all things *as Joash his father did*] R.V. **had done.** Of course this can only refer to the general resemblance not to the various parts of Amaziah's conduct. The next verse, which is almost word for word the same as is said in xii. 3 concerning Joash, shews how Amaziah walked in his father's footsteps.

5. *as soon as the kingdom was confirmed* [R.V. **established**] *in his hand*] The change is in conformity with 2 Chronicles. It is worth notice that the conspirators made no attempt, as it seems, to divert the succession from the house of David, though they might have expected that the son would take revenge on his father's murderers.

6. *the children of the murderers he slew not*] R.V. **he put not to death.** The Hebrew has a different verb here from that which is twice over used for 'to slay' in the previous verse.

according unto that which is written in the book of the law of Moses] The compiler of Kings either took this statement from his original

law of Moses, where*in* the LORD commanded, saying, The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children be put to death for the fathers; but every man shall be put to death for his own sin. He slew *of* Edom in 7
the valley of salt ten thousand, and took Selah by war, and called the name of it Joktheel unto this day.

record, or he inserted it in his narrative because he felt that it was an act which accorded with the legal command. In either case he looked upon the law as existing and observed in the days of Amaziah, and therefore that Deut. xxiv. 16, where this command is recorded, was existent before Amaziah's days, and therefore long before the days of Josiah, to which date some propose to refer the composition of the fifth book of Moses.

*where*in [R.V. as] *the Lord commanded*] The change is in accordance with the Hebrew, cf. Exod. xxxiv. 18. The relative is not here in its most usual form for the sense of 'as', but it could hardly be explained as=wherein. Another example of this less common use is in Jer. xxxiii. 22.

every man shall be put to death [R.V. shall die] *for his own sin*] The *Kethîb* gives a different form of the verb in the last clause and the R.V. has followed this. The text in Deut. xxiv. 16 agrees with the translation of A.V. and no doubt this was the reason why that form was preferred here also, being given by the *Keri*.

7. *He slew* of *Edom*] The Chronicler in 2 Chron. xxv. 5—10 gives an account of Amaziah's military preparations, before the expedition against Edom. He tells us that he gathered and marshalled his men of war, from twenty years old and upward, to the number of 300,000 choice men. To these he hired mercenary troops out of Israel, another 100,000. But a man of God forbade him to take the Israelites with him, as the Lord was not with Israel. Though grieved at the loss of the hundred talents, which he had paid for this body of allies, Amaziah separated them and sent them back again, wherefore their anger was greatly kindled against Judah, and they returned home in great wrath. After this with his own troops only Amaziah undertook the war with Edom, in which he was successful. According to Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 9. 1) the first planned expedition was against the Amalekites and Gebalites as well as the Edomites. On Gebal, a city of Phœnicia, see note on 1 Kings v. 18.

in the valley of salt] The R.V. prints both 'Valley' and 'Salt' with capitals to mark it as a proper name. The LXX. has a transliteration of the two words Γεμελέδ. The Valley of Salt lay at the south of the Dead Sea, and was on the border of the Edomite territory. We read that the Edomites had revolted from Judah in the days of Joram (2 Kings viii. 20—22), and it seems they had not as yet been reduced to subjection.

ten thousand] Beside the 10,000 slain in the battle, the Chronicler

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash, the son of

mentions 10,000 more who were taken captive, and cast headlong from the rock so 'that they all were broken in pieces' (2 Chron. xxv. 12).

and took Selah [R.V. Sela] *by war*] Sela which signifies 'a rock' is probably the city which was known in later times as 'Petra'. It was a city of Edom, not far from Mount Hor, about 2 days' journey northward from the top of the gulf of Akabah. The Chronicler says nothing about Sela, but mentions 'the rock' as the place from which the 10,000 captives were cast down. It may have been from the height on which Sela stood and took its name, that the execution of the captives took place.

called the name of it Joktheel] This name, which is a trisyllable (Jokthe-él) is interpreted by Gesenius as 'a Deo subactum'. It might with propriety be given by Amaziah to a city won by him after the direction which God had given him to put away the Israelite mercenaries. He would consider that the victory was a direct gift from God.

unto this day] That Sela continued to be called Joktheel at the time when the book of Kings was compiled is in the highest degree improbable. We know that Edom reconquered some of the lost territory very soon (2 Chron. xxviii. 17) and during the captivity made inroads into the south of Judah as far as Hebron (Joseph. *Ant.* XII. 8. 6). But in this passage the compiler takes the words of an earlier writer, exactly as they stood, and that earlier record was made before Sela was recovered and before the name Joktheel had fallen into disuse.

8—16. AMAZIAH'S CHALLENGE TO JOASH KING OF ISRAEL. ANSWER OF JOASH. DEFEAT OF AMAZIAH. DEATH OF JOASH. (2 Chron. xxv. 17—24).

8. *Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash*] The Chronicler gives a history anterior to the challenge of Amaziah, which explains why the king who had been divinely guided before the Edomite expedition was left without the like guidance afterwards. We are told that Amaziah brought back from Edom the gods of the children of Seir and set them up to be his gods, and when a prophet was sent to rebuke him, he threatened the messenger of God with punishment. Upon this the prophet forbare, but left the king with the words, 'I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this and hast not hearkened unto my counsel'. The Chronicler also says that before his challenge 'Amaziah king of Judah took advice', which forces one to think of the counsellors whom Rehoboam listened to at the time of his accession, and by following whom he brought about the revolt of the ten tribes. It may be that the conduct of the Israelitish soldiers whom Amaziah had sent home (see note on verse 7) incited the king of Judah to take some revenge on Israel. In 2 Chronicles (xxv. 13) we read that these men 'fell upon the cities of Judah, from Samaria even unto Beth-horon, and smote three thousand of them and took much spoil'. The 'three thousand' of course means 'of the inhabit-

Jehoahaz son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, Come, let us look one another *in* the face. And Jehoash the king of 9
Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife: and there passed by a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle. Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and 10
thine heart hath lifted thee up: glory *of this*, and tarry at home: for why shouldest thou meddle to *thy* hurt, that thou shouldest fall, *even* thou, and Judah with thee? But Ama- 11
ziah would not hear. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel

ants'. If this attack occurred while Amaziah was on his expedition against Edom, we can better understand his action.

Come, let us look one another in *the face*] A figurative expression equivalent to 'Let us measure swords', let us test each other's power. It was under all circumstances rash for the smaller power, the king of two tribes, to challenge the king of ten. Moreover if Amaziah had been victorious over Edom, Jehoash had repulsed the Syrians and recovered those portions of the land which had been lost in the time of Jehoahaz.

9. *the thistle...sent to the cedar*] What Jehoash wishes to convey is that he feels himself utterly Amaziah's superior, and that he can take no notice of his message. This he does by an apologue (cf. Jud. ix. 8—15) in which he speaks not of war but of marriage. The application is however quite clear. The thistle, who asks for the daughter of the cedar, is trodden down by some passing beast and perishes unregarded, while the cedar stands unharmed. Words could hardly convey more strongly the low opinion which Jehoash entertained of Amaziah's power.

10. *and thine heart hath lifted thee up*] The more usual expression is that 'the heart is lifted up'. Cf. Deut. viii. 14; xvii. 20; 2 Chron. xxvi. 16; Ezek. xxviii. 2. But when the heart is lifted up, the whole spirit of the man soars toward lofty aims.

glory of this] R.V. **glory thereof.** i.e. Of the Edomite conquest.

tarry [R.V. **abide**] *at home*] The change is to harmonize with the rendering in 2 Chronicles.

why shouldest thou meddle to thy *hurt*] The 'meddling' implied by the verb is generally the meddling of contention. Cf. Deut. ii. 9 where the A.V. has 'contend not with them', and in verses 5 and 19 of the same chapter, where the same word occurs, the R.V. has adopted 'contend' instead of 'meddle'. The order is there given in respect of those nations whom the Israelites are charged to let alone. Hence in this verse R.V. has on the margin 'provoke not calamity'. Calamity is thus viewed as an enemy, with whom Amaziah was unwisely venturing to go to war.

11. *But Amaziah would not hear*] Bearing out the proverb 'Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat'.

Jehoash king of Israel went up] When the king of Israel saw that

went up; and he and Amaziah king of Judah looked one another *in* the face at Beth-shemesh, which *belongeth* to
12 Judah. And Judah was put to the worse before Israel; and
13 they fled every man to their tents. And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh, and came *to* Jerusalem, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of
14 Ephraim unto the corner gate, four hundred cubits. And

Amaziah would persist, he apparently made the first movement. For Beth-shemesh, where the engagement took place was in Amaziah's territory, on the northern boundary of Judah. Jehoash therefore never allowed the army of Judah to enter the land of the Israelites.

Beth-shemesh] The name signifies 'house of the sun' and may contain some allusion to ancient idolatrous worship which prevailed there. (Cf. Jerem. xliii. 13.) The place is mentioned before this time as that to which the ark was brought when it was sent home by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi. 9, 12). It was one of the cities allotted to the priests, and in 1 Kings iv. 9 it is among the places selected for commissariat cities by Solomon. In the later history we find that the Philistines obtained possession of it (2 Chron. xxviii. 18).

12. *every man to their tents*] See above on xiii. 5.

13. *took Amaziah*] i.e. Took him prisoner. And there is some difficulty in deciding what became of Amaziah at this time and afterwards. In 2 Chronicles xxv. 23 it is added that Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem, and the *Kethib* (=they came) in this verse is intended to give that idea. Both A.V. and R.V. have translated the *Keri* (=he came). Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 9. 3) has given an account which makes Amaziah be brought as a captive into his own capital. 'When the troops (of Judah) were scattered in alarm, Amaziah was left alone and was taken prisoner by the enemy. Then Jehoash threatened to put him to death unless he persuaded the people of Jerusalem to open their gates and admit him with his army into the city. And Amaziah through necessity and in fear for his life caused the enemy to be received. And Jehoash having broken down about four hundred cubits of the walls, drove in his chariot through the opening into Jerusalem, bringing Amaziah as his prisoner.' This is a picture in which the imagination has added to the details of the sacred narrative. Yet the very formal way in which Amaziah is mentioned in this verse, both here and by the Chronicler, as 'Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah', seems to indicate that some crisis in the reign of this king is marked by the defeat at Beth-shemesh. Perhaps he was kept a prisoner till the death of Jehoash. The way in which it is said in verse 17 that Amaziah *lived* (not *reigned*) after the death of Jehoash, seems also, from its unusual nature, to mark an exceptional state of things.

from the gate of Ephraim] This portion of the wall was on the north of the city, opening towards the kingdom of Israel, and the demolition of a large part of the wall on that side was meant to leave the city

he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria. Now 15
the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Jehoash slept with his fathers, and was buried in 16
Samaria with the kings of Israel; and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead.

And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after 17
the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel fifteen years. And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not 18
written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

exposed to the entry of the Israelites if they were desirous to come in. The gate was where now is 'the Damascus gate'.

14. *and he took all the gold and silver*] The conquest appears to have been most complete. The Chronicler mentions the name of Obed-edom as the man who had charge at this time over the treasures of the house of the Lord.

and hostages] R.V. **the hostages also.** As in Chronicles. There is no other mention in the sacred history of persons taken as pledges for the fulfilment of the conditions of a peace. This circumstance marks the occasion as of unusual character, and makes it clear that terms were exacted from Amaziah for which the king of Israel held some distinguished persons of Judah, perhaps sons of the king, as security till they were fulfilled.

and returned to Samaria] Having so disposed the affairs of the southern kingdom as to secure the peace of his own, and probably having made it clear to the people of Judah that there was no hope for better days while Amaziah was their king.

15. *the rest of the acts of Jehoash*] The repetition of this sentence, which had been given in nearly the same terms in xiii. 12, shews us that the compiler probably used two documents, and copied from one in the former chapter, and from the other here. The words of this chapter are more in accord with the usual formula. In xiii. 13 the expression 'and Jeroboam sat upon his throne' is not so common as 'Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead'.

17—22. CLOSE OF THE REIGN OF AMAZIAH. HE IS SLAIN BY HIS SUBJECTS. SUCCESSION OF AZARIAH IN JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxv. 25—28; xxvi. 1—2.)

17. *Amaziah...lived after the death of Jehoash*] It has been already noticed that this is not the usual way in which the continuance of a king's reign is described. It may be that while Jehoash was on the throne of Israel Amaziah was kept in subjection, if not a prisoner, and even after that never came again to the full enjoyment of his power.

19 Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem: and
he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish, and
20 slew him there. And they brought him on horses: and he
was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of
21 David. And all the people of Judah took Azariah, which
was sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his

19. *Now* [R.V. **And**] *they made a conspiracy*] This was evidently the work of his own subjects. The Chronicler's statement is that the conspiracy was commenced 'after the time that Amaziah did turn away from following the Lord'. But this we see was immediately after the conquest of the Edomites, when the king 'brought the gods of the children of Seir' into the land. There must then have been a feeling of hostility to Amaziah among the right-minded of his own people, even before the battle of Beth-shemesh. We cannot tell whether the conspiracy came to a head in a short time, or only gained strength when the forces of Judah had been so thoroughly overcome by the northern army. But everything points to a desire on the part of the people of Judah to put down Amaziah on the first possible opportunity.

and he fled to Lachish] Lachish was considerably south of Jerusalem, and Amaziah probably thought that from it he could more easily escape to Edom, or elsewhere, out of harm's way. The place must have been of the nature of a fortress. For when the Israelites entered Canaan it had a king of its own, who joined in the league for the chastisement of the Gibeonites. The king is described as belonging to the Amorites who dwell in the mountains, so that it must have been in a hilly country (Josh. x. 6). We may note also that this city was made one of his fortresses by Rehoboam after the revolt of the ten tribes (2 Chron. xi. 9). Hence Amaziah after he escaped thither may have remained in security and held this place against the conspirators for a considerable time, living indeed, but hardly to be said to be reigning.

they sent after him] But we may conclude that his pursuers were not allowed to seize him without some resistance, which may have lasted a considerable time.

20. *they brought him on horses*] Perhaps this means that they used Amaziah's own chariot to convey the dead body to the royal city. 'Horses' in the plural number usually implies a chariot. There was clearly no desire on the part of the conspirators to offer any indignity to the king's dead body. 'The city of David' here spoken of is called strangely in 2 Chron. xxv. 28 'the city of Judah'.

21. *All the people of Judah took Azariah*] The people were all of one mind. They had rid themselves of the idolatrous father, but there was hope in the sixteen year old son. In Chronicles the name of this king is spelt *Uzziah*. This variation also occurs in the next chapter of 2 Kings (xv. 13, 30, 32, 34). With this may be compared *Azareel* (1 Chron. xxv. 18), which is found in verse 4 of the same chapter to be the person who is also called *Uzziel*. There is not much difference in the signification of the two forms.

father Amaziah. He built Elath, and restored it to Judah, 22
after that the king slept with his fathers.

In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash king of 23
Judah Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel *began* to
reign in Samaria, *and reigned* forty and one years. And he 24
did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed
not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who
made Israel to sin. He restored the coast of Israel from 25
the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according

22. *He built Elath*] Elath (also written *Eloth*) was at the northern extremity of the Gulf of Akabah. It is said in 1 Kings ix. 26 to have belonged to Edom, but at this time Judah was powerful enough to secure a road through Edom for trade purposes, and so extend the sway of their kingdom to the same point southward which they had occupied in the days of Solomon. Between that time and this, Elath had most likely fallen into decay. Hence the mention of 'building', which of course means restoration. (See on xv. 35.)

and restored it to Judah] As it had been in the days of Solomon. We need not suppose that more was done than to secure a passage through Edom between Elath and Jerusalem. Edom was of small use to Judah, but a port on the Red Sea was a great acquisition.

after that the king slept with his fathers] This is another of those vague notices which indicate an unusual state of things in Judah at this period. It would almost seem as though Azariah had been put in authority, if not on the throne, before the death of his father, and that he had been making his plans beforehand, only waiting for his father's death to carry them out. He was without doubt a popular monarch, for it is said (verse 21) that all Judah agreed on him for king.

23—29. Accession of Jeroboam II. king of Israel. His conquests and death. (Not in Chronicles.)

23. *In the fifteenth year of Amaziah*] Cf. verses 1 and 17. Amaziah reigned 29 years, and he lived 15 years after the death of Jehoash king of Israel. Therefore the numbers are in sufficiently close agreement, though we cannot be certain of the position which Amaziah occupied after his defeat by Jehoash at the battle of Beth-shemesh.

24. *who made Israel to sin*] R.V. **wherewith he made** &c. As before.

25. *He restored the coast of Israel*] Here, as before, 'coast' has no reference to 'seaboard'. The territory which Jeroboam recovered was on the east of the Jordan, and so what is meant is that he acquired again the portions of Gilead and Bashan that had been lost under previous kings.

from the entering of Hamath] R.V. **entering in of H.** This rendering is as in A.V. of 1 Kings viii. 65 and elsewhere. The 'enter-

to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the pro-
26 phet, which *was* of Gath-hepher. For the LORD saw the affliction of Israel, *that it was* very bitter: for *there was* not
27 any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel. And

ing in of Hamath' or 'as men come to Hamath' is frequently mentioned as a northern limit of the Israelite territory, Hamath being a chief city of Syria and under the rulers of Damascus. Cf. Num. xiii. 21; xxxiv. 8; Josh. xiii. 5; Jud. iii. 3.

unto the sea of the plain] R.V. **of the Arabah.** The sea of the Arabah is the Dead Sea. Cf. Deut. iii. 17; iv. 49; Josh. iii. 16; xii. 3. The Arabah is the name given to the valley from the Sea of Galilee southward to the desert. The name is found in A.V. in Josh xviii. 18, and has been introduced as a proper name in the R.V. constantly. The sea of the Arabah is defined in Josh. iii. 16 as 'the salt sea'. The district restored by Jeroboam was on the east of the Jordan, and extended from the valley of the Orontes where Hamath was situated, southward to the frontiers of the Moabites.

the Lord God of Israel] R.V. **the God of I.** As usual.

his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai] This must be the same person to whom the prophecy of Jonah is ascribed, for it is impossible to believe that there were two persons of this name, both prophets and both sons of Amittai. Jonah must therefore have prophesied before (or early in) the reign of Jeroboam II., the commencement of whose reign is placed about B.C. 823. Thus Jonah must be the earliest of those prophets, whose writings have been preserved. That there is nothing in the book of Jonah about the prophecy mentioned in this verse need not surprise us. That book is very brief and deals with but one episode in the prophet's life. Yet a prophet, whose ministry God employed about distant Nineveh, may certainly be expected to have had messages also for his own countrymen. Hosea (i. 1) and Amos (i. 1) also prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II.

which was *of Gath-hepher*] The same place is called Gittah-hepher in Josh. xix. 13. It was not far from Nazareth in the tribe of Zebulon. Jonah therefore was a prophet of the northern Kingdom. Jewish tradition makes him to have been the son of the widow of Zarephath, whom Elijah restored to life, and says also that it was he who attended Elijah when he set forth into the wilderness, and who was sent to anoint Jehu. All which things have no foundation but conjecture.

26. *the affliction of Israel*] Occasioned by the inroads of the Syrians, who had not only conquered the lands on the east side, but also at one time some considerable portions on the west of the Jordan. (Cf. above xiii. 3, 7.)

for there was *not any shut up, nor any left* [R.V. adds **at large**] *nor* [R.V. **neither was there**] *any helper*] For the change cf. 1 Kings xiv. 10 *note*. The expression means that there was no one, great or small, young or old, to whom they could look for aid.

the LORD said not that *he* would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash. Now the rest of the acts of 28
Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus, and Hamath, *which belonged* to Judah, for Israel, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And 29
Jeroboam slept with his fathers, *even* with the kings of Israel; and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead.

In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of 15

27. *And the Lord said not*] i.e. As yet the doom of Israel was not fixed. There was yet a place of repentance left.

but he saved them] Jeroboam was the saviour spoken of in xiii. 5. See note there.

28. *how he recovered Damascus*] We are told (2 Sam. viii. 6) that garrisons were placed in Damascus by David, and that the Syrians became servants to David. Having been once in the possession of the Israelites, the reconquest by Jeroboam II. may be spoken of as a recovery. A sort of occupation of Damascus was also granted by Ben-hadad to Ahab (1 Kings xx. 34), when the Israelite king was permitted to make streets for himself in the Syrian city.

and Hamath, which belonged [R.V. had belonged] *to Judah*] We find (2 Sam. viii. 9—11) that Toi the king of Hamath was one of David's tributaries, and from 1 Kings iv. 21—24 it is clear that in Solomon's days Hamath was part of his possessions. In 2 Chron. viii. 4 we learn that Solomon built 'store cities' in Hamath. The revolt of the ten tribes gave Hamath a chance of freedom again, of which the people probably availed themselves, and remained independent till the conquest by Jeroboam here spoken of. This event brought the city into the hand of Israel.

29. *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *his son*] This was the fourth in descent from Jehu, and according to the promise of God (2 Kings x. 30) that family was allowed so long a rule, but now the dynasty came to an end.

CH. XV. **1—7.** REIGN OF AZARIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE IS SMITTEN WITH LEPROSY AND LIVES APART. HIS DEATH. (2 Chron. xxvi. 1—23.)

1. *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam*...began *Azariah*] This statement cannot be made to accord with the numbers given in the previous chapters. In xiv. 1 it is said that Amaziah the father of Azariah began to reign in the second year of Joash king of Israel. Now Joash (xiii. 10) reigned sixteen years. Therefore he lived fourteen years contemporary with Amaziah. And the latter lived (xiv. 17) after Joash's death fifteen years more. Hence his whole reign was twenty-nine years. Again in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, Jeroboam II. began

Israel *began* Azariah son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.
2 Sixteen years old was he when he *began* to reign, and he
reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And his mother's
3 name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which
was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his
4 father Amaziah had done; save that the high places were
not removed: the people sacrificed and burnt incense still

to reign (xiv. 23). Hence Amaziah must have died and Azariah ascended the throne of Judah in the fourteenth or fifteenth year of Jeroboam, and not in the twenty-seventh as here stated. The explanation given in the margin of A.V. that the twenty-seven years are made up of the time when Jeroboam reigned alone, and several years in which he was consort with his father in the kingdom while Joash was engaged in the Syrian wars has nothing in Scripture to warrant it. Nor does it seem to have been the custom for a king to make his son partner in the sovereignty. If in any case such a plan had been resorted to, it would surely have been adopted when this king Azariah became a leper. But while it is expressly stated, in verse 5 below, that the king's son Jotham was set over the household and judged the people of the land, there is no mention of a co-regency. The numbers in the verse before us present a difficulty which has not yet been solved.

Azariah] In verses 13, 30, 32 and 34 of this chapter called *Uzziah*. On this change cf. xiv. 21 note.

2. *his mother's name* was *Jecholiah*] R.V. Jecoliah. This is the form in 2 Chron. xxvi. 3.

3. *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight*] R.V. eyes. i.e. His obedience to God's law was partial, like that of his father, for he also allowed the high-places to remain and to be used for worship: and the close of Azariah's reign was marked by further falling away, just as Amaziah's had been before.

4. *save that* [R.V. Howbeit] *the high places*] The rendering is thus made to agree with verse 25 of this chapter, where the Hebrew is the same. The Chronicler at this point supplies us with many particulars of Azariah's history unnoticed in Kings. Azariah, he says, 'sought God in the days of Zechariah', a prophet, who appears to have been the king's counsellor. He made war with success upon the Philistines, the Arabians and the Mehunim. The Ammonites became tributary to him, and he fortified Jerusalem. He built many towers, and digged many wells, had much cattle and many labourers in husbandry, 'for he loved husbandry'. He had also a large and well-ordered army of more than three hundred thousand men, and at their head were two thousand six hundred mighty men of valour. The king provided largely for their equipment with both defensive and offensive armour, and he also contrived many cunning engines of war, so that 'his name spread far abroad, for he was marvellously helped till he was strong'.

ASSYRIA, ARMENIA, SYRIA,
AND THE ADJACENT LANDS.
Region desolated by Tiglath Pileser (2 Kings. XV. 29 — Brown tint
Shalmaneser & Sargon 2 Kings. XVII. 6. XVIII. 9 11) — Green
Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings. XXIV.) — Yellow
English Miles.
0 50 100 150 200 250
ARMENIA
ASSYRIA
MEDIA
BABYLONIA
Mesopotamia
Aram Naharam
Syrian Desert
GREAT SEA
Mt Taurus
Mt Niphates
Mt Argæus
Mt Ararat
Lake Van
Lake Urmiah
Tigris R.
Euphrates R.
Jordan R.
Nineveh
Babylon
Damascus
Palmyra
Tadmor
Samaria
Jerusalem
Moab
Edom
Desert of Edom
Sahara was depeopled from these cities
Israelites first & second captivities
Exiles
Gozan
Haran
Carchemish
Pethor
Arpad
Antioch
Berœa
Hamath
Riblah
Kittim
Laodicea
Aradus
Arvad
Ruad
Tripolis
Byblah
Berothai
Heliopolis
Sidon
Zarephath
Tyre
Mt Hermon
Maacah
Mt Carmel
Dor
Ashdoth
Bosora
Joppa
Shechem
Ramoth gilead
Rabbath ammon
Gazer
Hebron
Bilhah
Rhinocolura
Shur
Zoar
Bozrah
Selah or Joktheel
Petra
Eziongeber
Edessa
Nisibis
Resena
Sinjara
Arbela
Rehoboth
Calah
Tiphsah
Reseph
Rehoboth?
Hatra
Huzzab
Anathe
Hena
Opis
Ava
Ahava
Ivah
Accad
Seleucia
Sepharvaim
Babel
Birs Nimrud
Dura
Is
Ur
Longitude East from Greenwich

CASPIAN
R. Araxes
Spauta or Martianus
Gaza or Ecbatana
SETTLEMENTS OF ISRAELITE EXILES
SECOND CAPTIVITY
Rages
M E D I A
Mt Orontes
Achmetha
Ecbatana
Bagistana
Elymais
Elam
Shushan
Susa
Cuth or Cuthah
the Chaldees
Mopeiver

on the high places. And the LORD smote the king, so that 5
he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a
several house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the
house, judging the people of the land. And the rest of the 6
acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in

5. *And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper*] The more political history in Kings tells us nothing about the reason why Azariah was smitten. The Chronicler however says that the king's successes caused his heart to be lifted up, and he presumed to go into the temple, and to take upon him the priest's office of burning incense. He was withstood by the priest (also called Azariah) and by fourscore other priests, but in his anger he persisted, and then it was that the leprosy rose up in his forehead. Whereupon he hasted to go forth from the temple because the Lord had smitten him.

and dwelt in a several house] The noun here is connected with the adjective that signifies 'free' and which is used of manumitted slaves. It has been suggested that the meaning here is that the place was one where those lived who could no longer mix with their fellows, and take part in the ordinary business of life. But in that case the building would be a public one or it would not have been so called. It appears therefore better to consider that the house was 'free' in the sense of 'standing apart', not mixed up among other dwellings. It was perhaps some place in the country to which the king confined himself after the disease had broken out upon him. The R.V. gives 'lazar-house' on the margin, but we must not suppose that the king went into a home devoted to such sufferers. He would live alone. The LXX. makes a sort of transliteration of the word but does not translate. The Vulgate has *in domo libera seorsum*.

For the English word 'several' in the sense of 'separate', cf. Pilkington's Works (*Parker Society*) p. 64 where the author speaks of people 'buried not in hallowed churchyards by any bishops, but in a *several* place appointed for the same purpose without the city', and further down on the same page he describes a burial-ground as 'an honest place to be kept *several* from beasts and unreverent using the same'.

the king's son was *over the house*] R.V. **household**. From 1 Kings iv. 6 where Ahishar is spoken of as being over Solomon's household, and 2 Kings xix. 2 where the same office is assigned to Eliakim in the time of Hezekiah, it is clear that the post was one of great dignity, but it was in no way connected with a regency. Eliakim is mentioned as the most prominent person among those who were sent to confer with Rabshakeh, and to consult the prophet Isaiah, but the duties he performed were those of a subject. And though Jotham is here said to have judged the people of the land, we cannot from this conclude that he was joint ruler with his father.

6. *the rest of the acts of Azariah*] The record of these is said by the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxvi. 22) to have been written, first and last, by Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. We know from Is. vi. 1 that

7 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David: and Jotham his son reigned in his stead.

8 In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in 9 Samaria six months. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made 10 Israel to sin. And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired

the great vision of the Lord in His glory was seen by Isaiah in the year of Azariah's death, so that the prophet was living at the time when the history of the reign was completed, and we can see from other notices that the prophets not unfrequently became the historians of the period in which they lived. Cf. 1 Chron. xxix. 29; 2 Chron. ix. 29; xii. 15; xiii. 22; xx. 34; xxvi. 22.

7. *and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David*] His body, as appears from 2 Chron., was not laid with the rest of the kings in the royal sepulchre, but apparently in the same piece of land. 'They buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which belonged to the kings: for they said; He is a leper'.

Jotham his son reigned] We can scarcely suppose that this notice would have been thus set down in the ordinary formula after Azariah's death, if Jotham had been joint ruler all the time of his father's leprosy. The smiting of the king must have been in the latter part of his reign. The conquests, buildings, agriculture, and military organization described by the Chronicler (see above on verse 4) must have needed many years to bring to the perfection they attained. Therefore, though Azariah's reign was fifty-two years long, we need not think of him as a leper for more than the last ten years. As Jotham succeeded his father at twenty-five he would only have been fifteen when he was placed over the household. This may perhaps make ten years appear too long a time to assign to his father's leprosy.

8—12. ZECHARIAH KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN, AFTER SIX MONTHS, BY SHALLUM, WHO SUCCEEDED HIM. (Not in Chronicles.)

8. *Zachariah* [R.V. **Zechariah**] *the son of Jeroboam*] This was as is noticed below, in verse 12, the fourth generation of the family of Jehu. The sovereignty had been promised them no longer.

9. *who* [R.V. **wherewith he**] *made Israel to sin*] And the same change is necessary in verses 18, 24 and 28 of this chapter.

10. *Shallum the son of Jabesh*] Nothing more is known of him than is given in this verse. The death of the last scion of the house of Jehu by the sword appears to be foretold in Amos vii. 9, 'I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword'.

against him, and smote him before the people, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of 11
Zachariah, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. This *was* the word of the 12
LORD which he spake unto Jehu, saying, Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth *generation*. And so it came to pass.

Shallum the son of Jabesh *began* to reign in the nine and 13
thirtieth year of Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full

before the people] i. e. Publicly. Hence it would seem that the conspiracy of Shallum had large popular support. But the LXX. here has plural verbs '*they* conspired', '*they* smote' and '*they* slew' and writes the two words translated 'before the people' as though they were one proper name Κεβλαὰμ. Hence some have thought that Shallum had a fellow-conspirator of whom this was the name. The words occur in such a combination and sense nowhere else, and the preposition, rendered 'before', is not found except in the Chaldee portions of the Old Testament. But there is nothing in the Hebrew to warrant the changes of the LXX., though Ewald, and after him the late Dean Stanley, adopted them as representing a more correct text. Stanley says (*Jewish Church* ii. 308) 'Zechariah was, it would seem, succeeded by a king, whose very name is almost lost to us, Kobolam, and Kobolam was succeeded by Shallum'. There needs a great deal of manipulation of even the text of the LXX. to extract any such statement from it. A much more reasonable conjecture is to make Κεβλαὰμ (though found nowhere else) the name of the place where Zachariah was murdered.

11. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Zachariah*] We can see from the language of the prophet Amos that the corruption of Israel was very great at this time, and that the nation appeared incorrigible. In these excesses Zechariah no doubt bore his share. Hence the shortness of his reign.

12. *the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu*] For the promise, see above, x. 30.

thy sons] The R.V. brings the words 'to the fourth generation' forward in the verse and places them after 'sons' thus making the sentence conform, as it does in the original, to the order of the words in the promise (x. 30).

13—15. SHALLUM KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN, AFTER A MONTH, BY MENAHEM. (Not in Chronicles.)

13. *a full month*] R.V. **the space of a month.** The margin of A.V. gives, 'Heb. a month of days'. The rendering of R. V. corresponds with that of A.V. in Gen. xxix. 7 for the same words. The Hebrew for 'of days' is added adverbially, as we use 'time' in such phrases as 'in a month's *time*' = 'in a month' 'in a year's *time*' &c.

month in Samaria. For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah, and came *to* Samaria, and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his
15 stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.
16 Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that *were* therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah: because they opened

14. *Menahem the son of Gadi*] It has been suggested that Menahem was an officer of king Zechariah and advanced from Tirzah, where he was stationed, to Samaria to avenge the murder of his master. This may have been so, but if the expression 'before the people' in verse 10 be correct, it would appear as if Zechariah had few to take his part.

Tirzah] Was made a royal residence by Jeroboam I. (1 Kings xiv. 17). The site of Tirzah has not been identified, but its beauty is extolled in Cant. vi. 4. We learn from 1 Kings xvi. 17 that it was a fortress capable of standing a siege, and so may have been a military post, and Menahem an officer there.

and reigned in his stead] These words are not represented in the LXX.

15. *And* [R.V. Now] *the rest* &c.] As above in verse 11. It may be noticed that Menahem's conduct in slaying Shallum is not called 'a conspiracy'. Menahem seems to have been a man of much ferocity, and probably carried out his plans without helpers.

16—22. MENAHEM KING OF ISRAEL. HE SMITES TIPHSAH. PUL, KING OF ASSYRIA, COMES AGAINST ISRAEL BUT IS BOUGHT OFF. DEATH OF MENAHEM. (Not in Chronicles.)

16. *Menahem smote Tiphsah*] Tiphsah is mentioned 1 Kings iv. 24 as at one boundary of the dominion of Solomon. The place there intended is Thapsacus on the west side of the Euphrates, and is famous in classic history as the point at which Cyrus with his 10000 Greeks crossed that river. If that be the place here spoken of, we must understand Menahem to have carried his victorious arms from Samaria to the Euphrates. For a king who had put himself on the throne by force, at a time when Israel was thoroughly disorganised, this seems inconceivable. For this reason most people consider the place here mentioned to have been within the kingdom of Israel. Josephus (*Ant.* ix. 11. 1) calls it Thapsa, and speaks of it as a place which refused to admit the usurper. If this be so, it is mentioned nowhere else, and this seems to be by far the most natural explanation.

and the coasts [R.V. borders] *thereof*] That is, all the country round about this offending town.

from Tirzah] Menahem's proceeding appears to have been this. After the slaughter of Shallum in Samaria, he returned to Tirzah, and, making that his headquarters, went forth thence to reduce the country to subjection.

they opened not to him] Josephus says they closed their gates and

not *to him*, therefore he smote *it; and* all the women therein that were with child he ript up. In the nine and thirtieth 17
year of Azariah king of Judah *began* Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD: 18
he departed not all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. *And* Pul the king 19
of Assyria came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a

barred them against him. At a time when the king was changing every few months the citizens might naturally feel unwilling to admit a new claimant for the rule, till they were certain of what was happening elsewhere.

ript up] This savage conduct is mentioned (2 Kings viii. 12) among the enormities which Hazael was likely to perpetrate, and in the prophets (Hosea xiii. 16; Amos i. 13) it is specified as part of the sufferings of Samaria from her invaders, and as inflicted by the Ammonites on the women of Gilead. But nowhere except here do we find such cruelty exercised by an Israelite. It marks the time as one of great degradation and barbarity.

18. *all his days*] These words are unrepresented in the LXX.

19. And *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land*] R. V. **There came against the land Pul** &c. The sentence has no conjunction, and so R. V. represents the original better. In the LXX. we find 'In his days' put as an introduction to the sentence, and the name of **Pul** represented by Φουὰ, or Φουλὰ or Φοὺλ.

In his work on 'the Cuneiform Inscriptions and the Old Testament', Prof. Schrader (p. 133. Engl. Trans. Vol. 1. p. 230) identifies Pul with Tiglath-pileser, and his grounds for so doing may be thus stated. Azariah king of Judah was a contemporary of Menahem king of Israel (2 Kings xv. 17). The Bible makes them both also contemporaries with Pul king of Assyria, while the inscriptions speak of them as contemporary with Tiglath-pileser the second. In Berosus' Chaldæan history Pul is mentioned as a Chaldæan, Tiglath-pileser in the inscriptions calls himself king of Chaldæa. The name which in Berosus is 'Phulus' appears in the canon of Ptolemy as Πῶρος. This Porus became king of Babylon B.C. 731, in which year we learn from the inscriptions that Tiglath-pileser received homage from the Babylonian king, Merodach-baladan, and became thus lord paramount in Babylon. In the year 727—726 Tiglath-pileser dies, and at the same time a change of ruler takes place in Babylonia by the retirement of Porus. Pul or Por does not appear among the Assyrian kings unless it be under another name, and the only prince with whom the history allows him to be identical is Tiglath-pileser. Pul and Por are really the same name, changed by well-known phonetic laws. Hence it seems not improbable that Pul, Πῶρος, and Tiglath-pileser are names of one and the same person.

Another supposition is that Pul is the name of one of Tiglath-pileser's

thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him
20 to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, *even* of all the mighty *men* of wealth, of each man fifty shekels *of* silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and
21 stayed not there in the land. And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the
22 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers; and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead.

23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah Pekahiah the son of Menahem *began* to reign over Israel in Samaria,

generals, who was in charge of the expedition against Israel. But he is in this verse very expressly called king of Assyria, and the Bible narrative continually makes it clear when an official person, not the king himself, is in command. For an example cf. Isaiah xx. 1.

came against the land] i.e. Was making a hostile advance, and would have invaded Israel but for the bribe.

a thousand talents of silver] This represents a very large sum. Omri only gave two talents of silver (1 Kings xvi. 24) for the ground on which he built Samaria; and in Hezekiah's time the king of Assyria's demands were only for 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold (2 Kings xviii. 14). But we can have no doubt from the writings of the contemporary prophets that the northern kingdom was rich at this time. Amos speaks of their houses of ivory (iii. 15), of their houses of hewn stone and their pleasant vineyards (v. 11), how they lay upon beds of ivory, ate of the choicest, had music in their feasts, drank wine in bowls and anointed themselves with the best ointments (vi. 4—6): all indications of excessive wealth.

that his hand might be with him] The desire of Menahem was to secure Pul as an ally, and to gain his help against other adversaries; a very natural aim under the circumstances. To obtain this he no doubt acknowledged the Assyrian as his superior, and did homage to him, as well as paying him this large bribe.

to confirm the kingdom in his hand] These words, which make clear Menahem's object, are unrepresented in the LXX.

20. *Menahem exacted the money*] Fifty shekels=one maneh, was the sixtieth part of a talent of silver. Hence the mighty men of wealth must have numbered 60,000, a number which tells of the richness of the time. The population of Israel in David's time had 800,000 soldiers (2 Sam. xxiv. 9).

stayed not there] He had evidently made his approach to the very border, and perhaps over it.

22. *Pekahiah his son*] Ten years of stern rule had enabled Menahem to secure the throne for his son, though the latter had but a short tenure of power.

and reigned two years. And he did *that* which *was* evil in 24
the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the sins of
Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. But 25
Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired
against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the
king's house, with Argob and Arieh; and with him fifty men
of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his
room. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that 26
he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the chroni-
cles of the kings of Israel.

In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah 27

23—26. REIGN OF PEKAHIAH KING OF ISRAEL. HE IS SLAIN BY PEKAH, THE SON OF REMALIAH, WHO SUCCEEDS HIM. (Not in Chronicles.)

25. *Pekah...a captain of his*] R. V. **his captain.** The word is the same which in vii. 2 is used for the captain (A. V. lord) on whose hand the king of Israel leaned. Probably Pekah occupied some such position about the king, which gave him the opportunity of attacking his master, for the murder was perpetrated 'in the castle of the king's house'. From the mention of the fifty men of the Gileadites who took part with him in the conspiracy, it has been conjectured that Pekah was himself a native of that wild land, the home in former days of Jephthah and of Elijah. His conduct is of the kind to be expected from one nursed in such wild localities.

in the palace [R.V. **castle**] *of the king's house*] The word is rendered 'palace' everywhere in A.V. except Prov. xviii. 19 'like the bars of a *castle*'. But here and in 1 Kings xvi. 18 (see note there) the sense requires some word expressive of security and protection from a foe. Hence the change in R.V. We know so little of the construction of the royal houses of Israel that it is difficult to be precise about what is meant. But it seems most likely that the king when he knew that Pekah and his fifty comrades were bent on his murder would take refuge in the most fortified place he could reach.

with Argob and Arieh] Doubtless two friends who had remained with Pekahiah to the last.

of the Gileadites] The LXX. has in some MSS. the words ἀπὸ τῶν τετρακοσίων = of the four hundred. I have found no means of explaining the reading. Before 'fifty' in this clause R.V. inserts **were.**

and he killed [R.V. **slew**] *him and reigned in his room*] R.V. **stead.** The words are exactly the same in the original as the closing words of verse 10 above. Both should be alike in the English.

27—31. PEKAH KING OF ISRAEL FOR TWENTY YEARS. INVASION OF ISRAEL BY TIGLATH-PILESER. PEKAH IS SLAIN BY HOSHEA. (Not in Chronicles.)

27. *Pekah the son of Remaliah*] This king is chiefly remarkable

Pekah the son of Remaliah *began* to reign over Israel in
28 Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. And he did *that* which
was evil in the sight of the LORD: he departed not from the
sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin.
29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser
king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and
Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee,

because of the attempts which he made against the kingdom of Judah, and which gave rise to the prophecies recorded in Isaiah vii.—ix. On the history of these attacks on the sister kingdom, see notes on xvi. 5—9. Isaiah often speaks of Pekah as 'the son of Remaliah' only, without mention of his own name, so that we are led to conclude that Remaliah must have been some well-known person.

29. *Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] This is the second Assyrian king of this name; the first having flourished in the twelfth century B.C. For some of the facts connected with his history see note on verse 19 above. According to the Assyrian canon Tiglath-pileser reigned 18 years, from B.C. 745 to B.C. 727, and the conquests mentioned in this verse are supposed to have been made in B.C. 734.

Ijon] In the north of Palestine, in the tribe of Naphtali. It has been mentioned previously (1 Kings xv. 20) as ravaged by Benhadad's captains. The towns here enumerated were exposed to the first attack of any enemy from the north.

Abel-beth-maachah] R.V. maacah. This city like Ijon lay in the extreme north of Israel, and was also plundered by Benhadad's officers. It is spoken of as 'a city and a mother in Israel' (2 Sam. xx. 19). It is elsewhere called *Abel-maim*.

Janoah] This place is mentioned nowhere else, and its site has not been determined. But, from the connexion in which it here occurs, it must have been situate in the northern part of the tribe of Naphtali.

Kedesh] This town was one of the cities of refuge, and situate in the tribe of Naphtali. Hence it is called Kedesh-Naphtali (Jud. iv. 6). Here Barak lived, and in later times (1 Macc. xi. 63, 73) it is mentioned as the scene of a battle between Jonathan Maccabæus and the troops of Demetrius. The name indicates that from the first it was a 'holy' place.

Hazor] Another fortified city of the tribe of Naphtali. It stood on the high ground overlooking Lake Merom. It was a very important place before the Israelites entered Canaan (Josh. xi. 10). Jabin was the king thereof whose general Sisera was defeated by Deborah and Barak (Jud. iv. 2, 17). It was strengthened by Solomon for the defence of his kingdom on the north (see 1 Kings ix. 15, note).

Gilead] The mountainous country on the east of the Jordan, extending from Bashan on the north to Moab and Ammon on the south.

Galilee] This name, though afterwards given to a wide district, was

all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria.
And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against 30
Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him,
and reigned in his stead, in the twentieth year of Jotham the
son of Uzziah. And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all 31
that he did, behold, they *are* written in the book of the
chronicles of the kings of Israel.

In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah king of 32
Israel *began* Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to
reign. Five and twenty years old was he when he *began* to 33
reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. And his
mother's name *was* Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. And 34
he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD: he did

at first only applied to a portion of the country round about Kedesh-Naphtali. In it were the twenty cities which Solomon gave to Hiram king of Tyre, for helping him in his building of the temple, and his own house (1 Kings ix. 11). In the verse before us Galilee must refer only to the northern part of the district afterwards so named.

all the land of Naphtali] We can see, from this addition, where the ravages of Tiglath-pileser were made. He came into the northern portion of Israel on the west of Jordan, and on the east of the river overran a larger district, which from its mountainous character was more sparsely populated and so more easily reduced.

carried them captive to Assyria] This event is placed from the evidence of the Assyrian inscriptions in B.C. 734. To carry away great numbers of the population of a conquered district and settle them elsewhere was frequent with the Assyrian monarchs.

30. *Hoshea the son of Elah*] Josephus (*Ant.* IX. 13. 1) says Hoshea was a friend of Pekah. He is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions (Smith, *Assyrian Discoveries*, p. 285), and it appears from that record as if he had been set up by the Assyrian king. Perhaps Hoshea, having conspired and slain Pekah, put himself as a vassal under the protection of Assyria. The inscription speaks of the tribute which he was to pay to the Assyrians. Though the death of Pekah is here mentioned we have a further account of his attempts against Judah in the next chapter.

in the twentieth year of Jotham] As Jotham is said below in verse 33 to have reigned only sixteen years, there must be some mistake in the numbers either here or there. The occurrence of such variations makes the task of fixing the chronology very difficult, and probably no satisfactory solution will be discovered, to the several questions which arise on this subject, until more is known of the contemporary history. If ever the annals of Assyria and Egypt be brought into trustworthy order, the points of contact with Jewish affairs will help to settle some dates and to clear up what seems now irremediably obscure.

35 according to all that his father Uzziah had done. Howbeit
the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and
burnt incense still in the high places. He built the higher
36 gate of the house of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts of
Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the
37 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? In those
days the LORD began to send against Judah Rezin the king
38 of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah. And Jotham slept

32—38. JOTHAM KING OF JUDAH. COMMENCEMENT OF THE PLOTS OF ISRAEL AGAINST JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxvii. 1—9.)

34. *according to all that his father Uzziah had done*] The Chronicler notes the great exception 'Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord'. As this sin of Uzziah had not been recorded by the compiler of Kings, it is natural that he should not allude to it in the notice of Jotham.

35. *Howbeit the high places*] In 2 Chronicles it is merely said 'the people did yet corruptly'.

He built the higher [R.V. **upper**] *gate of the house of the Lord*] By 'build' is only meant 'restore' or 'beautify'. The gate existed before. The temple stood on a slope, of which the northern side was the highest and the gate on that side was the one of which Jotham made some restoration. The account of his buildings is somewhat fuller in 2 Chronicles. 'On the wall of Ophel he built much. Moreover he built cities in the hill-country of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers'. His success in war, also unnoticed by the compiler of Kings, is dwelt on by the Chronicler. He fought with the Ammonites and conquered them, and the children of Ammon paid him in that year a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and the same quantity of barley, and they continued the payment for a second and a third year. 'So Jotham became mighty because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God'.

37. *In those days*] In the days of Jotham the confederacy between Israel and Syria against Judah was formed, though the effects were not felt to the full till the days of Jotham's son Ahaz. In Isaiah vii. we find that Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, had come up against Jerusalem to fight against it, and were minded to set up a king in Judah of their own choosing, who is there spoken of as 'the son of Tabeel'. At that time for the consolation and encouragement of Ahaz the oracle concerning 'Immanuel' was sent to him through Isaiah.

the Lord began to send] Though He began to send enemies upon Judah, yet the Lord did not, as Isaiah's prophecy shews us, leave His people without hope, but in the midst of their chastisement He was thinking upon mercy, and spake by the mouth of the prophet concerning that greatest mercy, the sending of His Son.

Rezin the king of Syria] The name of this king appears several times in the Assyrian records. His country had before this time been made

with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father: and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead.

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah *began* to reign. 2 Twenty years old *was* Ahaz when he *began* to reign, and reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, and did not *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, like David his father. 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel,

tributary to Assyria. The policy of Rezin appears not only to have embraced a conquest of Judah in alliance with Pekah, but also, after making himself more powerful in that way, the shaking off the yoke of Assyria. For this reason the Assyrian power was the more easily induced to help Ahaz in resisting Israel and Syria. The history of that help is given in the next chapter where the acts of Pekah against Judah are more fully dwelt upon.

CH. XVI. REIGN OF AHAZ, KING OF JUDAH. HE REIGNS WICKEDLY. ISRAEL AND SYRIA MAKE WAR UPON JERUSALEM. AHAZ OBTAINS ASSISTANCE FROM TIGLATH-PILESER. (2 Chron. xxviii. 1—21.)

1. *In the seventeenth year of Pekah*] It is clear that some error has crept into the chronological statements of this period. In the previous chapter (xv. 30) we read that Pekah was murdered by Hoshea in the twentieth year of Jotham. From the present verse it seems that Ahaz began to reign, and so Jotham died, before Pekah's death. In reference to Ahaz too the figures are not without some difficulty. He begins his reign at 20 years old and reigns 16 years. But his son Hezekiah (2 Kings xviii. 2) was twenty-five years old at his accession, and so must have been born when Ahaz was not more than eleven.

With reference, however, to the death of Pekah in the reign of Jotham, we see from Is. vii. 1, that Pekah was still alive and conducting operations against Judah in the reign of Ahaz. This agrees entirely with verse 5 of the present chapter. Therefore in any chronological calculation the words of xv. 30 ought to be neglected. It is not easy to explain how the error arose, but it is manifest that there is an error.

2. *and did* [R.V. he did] *not* that *which* was *right*] This negative form of statement has not occurred in the account of any previous king of Judah. The offences of Ahaz were exceptional.

3. *he walked in the way of the kings of Israel*] This is more fully explained by the Chronicler, and means that he followed after all kinds of heathen idolatry, not that he introduced the worship of the calves from Israel into Judah. 'He made molten images for the Baalim, and burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom.' 'It is hard not to be infected with a contagious neighbourhood. Whoever read that the kingdom of Israel was seasoned with the vicinity of the true religion of Judah? Goodness, such as our nature is, is not so apt to spread. A tainted air doth more easily affect a sound body, than a wholesome air can clear the sick'. (Bp. Hall.)

yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to
the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out
4 from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and
burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, and under
5 every green tree. Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah son
of Remaliah king of Israel came up *to* Jerusalem to war:
6 and they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome *him*. At

yea, and made his son to pass through the fire] i.e. To Moloch. Thus introducing into Judah once more, as in Solomon's days (1 Kings xi. 7) the worship of 'the abomination of the children of Ammon'. The words of this verse might be made to refer only to a passing through flame, as a ceremony significant of purification. But the words of the Chronicler are stronger: 'he burnt his children in the fire.' From which it would appear that not one son only was offered. That the children offered in such sacrifices were actually burnt is seen from 2 Kings xvii. 31; Ezek. xvi. 21; and many other passages. But from the words of Ezekiel it may perhaps be inferred that the victims were first slain and then burnt. 'Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters whom thou hast borne unto me and these hast thou sacrificed unto them to be devoured...thou hast slain my children and delivered them up in causing them to pass through the fire unto them.'

according to the abominations of the heathen] The word 'abomination' is constantly employed of idols and their worship, their rites being often of the foulest character. The heathen practices of Tyre and Sidon, of the Ammonites, and of the Syrians of Damascus all now found place and worshippers in Jerusalem.

4. *And he sacrificed, &c.*] Hitherto we have heard only that *the people* continued the worship in the high places. Now *the king* takes part in the same, and so makes it doubly popular.

under every green tree] Expressly mentioned (Deut. xii. 2) as among the wrong doings of the heathen: 'Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations, which ye shall possess, served their gods, upon the high mountains and upon the hills, and *under every green tree*'.

5. *came up* to *Jerusalem to war*] The plans which had been formed in the reign of Jotham (see xv. 37) were now put into execution. And from Isaiah vii. 2 we can see into what agitation the people of Judah were brought by the advance of the allied enemies. 'It was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim (i.e. Israel). And his heart was moved and the heart of his people as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind'.

they besieged Ahaz, but could not overcome him] i.e. They never took Jerusalem (cf. Is. vii. 1). This is the security which Isaiah was instructed to promise to Ahaz. But it is evident from the narrative of the Chronicler that much damage was done in the land by the invasion. He says (2 Chron. xxviii. 5) that Ahaz was delivered into the hand of the king of Syria, who smote him and carried away a great multitude of captives and brought them to Damascus, and he was also delivered into

that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, and drave the Jews from Elath: and the Syrians came *to* Elath, and dwelt there unto this day. So Ahaz sent messengers to 7

the hand of Pekah king of Israel, who slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand men in one day, and carried away captive two hundred thousand, women, sons and daughters, along with much spoil. We can understand the stir caused in Jerusalem by the approach of an army which had already inflicted such blows upon the land.

6. *Rezin...recovered Elath to Syria*] Elath was a place of much importance to the Jews. It was situate at the top of the gulf of Akabah (*sinus Ælaniticus*), and was part of the land of Edom. But when the Edomites were in subjection to Judah, the port was to all intents and purposes a harbour of Judah. Now the Jews were driven from it, and the Syrians came and occupied it, having overrun Edom in their progress towards Elath.

the Syrians came to *Elath*] The LXX. says the 'Idumæans', i.e. the Edomites came to Elath, and this is supported by the marginal reading (*Keri*) of the Hebrew Bible. But it is a reading which cannot be accepted. The Edomites were at Elath already. It was part of their own land. Therefore they could not be said to come to it. There is very little difference in Hebrew between 'Idumæans' i.e. Edomites, and Aramæans, i.e. Syrians. The latter is ארומים, the former אדומים, a difference only in one letter and that of the slightest kind. Hence the confusion.

and dwelt there unto this day] On this expression as a mark of faithful reproduction by the compiler of what he found in the document he was using, see note on chap. ii. 22.

The Chronicler, before mentioning the appeal of Ahaz to Tiglath-Pileser, which is here related in the next verse, gives an account how the two hundred thousand captives taken by the Israelites (see above on verse 5) were brought to Samaria, and how Oded, a prophet of the Lord, forbad in God's name that the children of Judah and Jerusalem should be kept by Israel for bondmen and bondwomen. Some also among the chief men of Israel declared that the captives should not be brought into Samaria. They were in consequence set free, and, after being fed and clothed, were conducted homeward as far as Jericho. The Chronicler also records the names of the men who thus withstood the bringing in of the Jewish prisoners as if he were taking them from some contemporary record.

7. *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*] According to 2 Chron. (xxviii. 17, 18) it was not only by Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel that Ahaz was straitened when he sent for help to Assyria. 'The Edomites had again come and smitten Judah, and carried away captives. The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the low countries, and of the south of Judah, and had taken Beth-shemesh and Ajalon with Gederoth, and Socho with the villages thereof, and Timnah likewise and Gimzo, and they dwelt there.' So that on north and south alike Ahaz was sorely beset. 'For the

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Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, I *am* thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which
8 rise up against me. And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the treasures of the king's house, and sent *it for* a present to the king of
9 Assyria. And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him: for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it, and carried *the people of* it captive to Kir, and slew Rezin.

Lord brought Judah low, because of Ahaz, for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the Lord'.

I am thy servant and thy son] Ahaz, in return for the help he seeks, offers to make himself the vassal of Assyria. With the name 'son', as used in such an address, may be compared the 'brother' which Ahab uses of the conquered Benhadad (1 Kings xx. 32). Ahaz in his petition naturally only mentions those enemies on the north upon whom Tiglath-pileser could most readily fall. Perhaps he felt that, if relieved from them, he could dispose of the Edomites and Philistines by his own power.

8. *silver and gold that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] Ahaz appears to have dealt very irreverently with the treasures of the temple. The Chronicler says he 'gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God'. This looks as if he melted down the gold and silver to send to Tiglath-pileser.

for *a present*] The word is not that term for present which literally signifies 'blessing' (see note on v. 15). This word has rather the sense of a 'bribe'. In Exod. xxiii. 8 it is 'the *gift* that blindeth the wise'. In Deut. xxvii. 25 it is 'the *reward* taken for slaying the innocent'. In 1 Sam. viii. 3 it is a '*bribe*'. In Ezek. xxii. 12 it is a *gift* taken for shedding blood. So that the *present* of Ahaz is not represented by this word as of a noble character.

9. *the king of Assyria went up against Damascus*] In the Assyrian records it appears that Tiglath-pileser went first against Damascus in B. C. 733, but not being successful came again next year and then reduced the city. (Schrader, p. 152.) Cf. Amos i. 3—5.

the people of *it captive*] See above on xv. 29.

to Kir] The LXX. does not represent these words, and we have no certain data to guide us to the locality intended. Isaiah, who lived close amid all these events, places Elam and Kir in close conjunction (xxii. 6). Elam was in lower Mesopotamia, Kir was therefore most likely in the same district. Rawlinson suggests that it is a variant for *Kish* or *Cush* (Susiana) which was just on the south of Elam.

and slew Rezin] Thus making himself entire master of Syria. Hence, as we see immediately, Tiglath-pileser appears to have stayed some time in Damascus,

And king Ahaz went *to* Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser 10
king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus: and
king Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar,
and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship
thereof. And Urijah the priest built an altar according to 11
all that king Ahaz had sent from Damascus: so Urijah the
priest made *it* against king Ahaz came from Damascus.
And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw 12
the altar: and the king approached to the altar, and offered

10—18. AHAZ GOES TO DAMASCUS. FINDS A HEATHEN ALTAR, THE LIKE OF WHICH HE SETS UP IN THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE. FURTHER DESECRATION OF THE TEMPLE FURNITURE. (2 Chron. xxviii. 22—25.)

10. *king Ahaz went* to *Damascus*] Summoned no doubt by the Assyrian king to make full submission to the power which had relieved him from the attacks of Rezin. 'I am thy servant' was to find expression in more than mere words.

and saw an [R.V. **the**] *altar*] The noun is definite in the original, and probably the most conspicuous and grandest among the altars of Damascus is intended. We know from the story of Naaman that the house of Rimmon was the place to which the Syrian king of that day went to worship. We must think of the most splendid altar in Rimmon's finest temple as the pattern which Ahaz sent home. Either from inclination, or because policy required him to acknowledge the deities of his superior lord, he is reported by the chronicler to have said (2 Chron. xxviii. 23), 'Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore will I sacrifice to them that they may help me'.

sent to Urijah the priest] This may be the same person who is mentioned by Isaiah viii. 2 as one of the faithful witnesses whom he chose for himself. If this be so, he must have grievously fallen away ere the priest of Jehovah's temple would be agent for the manufacture of an idolatrous altar. Bp Hall says on this, 'Never any prince was so foully idolatrous, as that he wanted a priest to second him. A Urijah is fit to humour an Ahaz. Greatness could never command anything which some servile wits were not ready both to applaud and justify.'

11. *so Urijah...Damascus*] These words are omitted by the LXX. though not in all MSS. Perhaps because the preceding clause ends with the same word as this, the eye of a scribe may have been misled. The part played by Urijah in this business is not mentioned by the Chronicler. The R.V. renders this clause **So did Urijah the priest make it.** This is done to shew that the word 'so' refers to the previous phrase 'according to all that king Ahaz had sent'.

12. *and the king approached to* [R.V. **drew near unto**] *the altar*] The rendering adopted by R.V. is much the most frequent in A.V. Except in this verse 'approach' is not used of 'drawing near' to an altar, but always 'come near' or 'draw near'.

13 thereon. And he burnt his burnt offering and his meat offering, and poured his drink offering, and sprinkled the
14 blood of his peace offerings, upon the altar. And he brought also the brasen altar, which *was* before the LORD, from the forefront of the house, from between the altar and the house of the LORD, and put it on the north side of the
15 altar. And king Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, Upon the great altar burn the morning burnt offering, and

and offered thereon] At such an altar he might be his own priest. The LXX. does not represent these words.

13. *his meat offering*] R.V. **meal-offering.** See above iii. 20 note. The same change is to be made three times over in verse 15 below. The king's wish and order was that not only all his own sacrifices, but all those of the people, should be offered upon the new altar. He did not propose to put down the worship of Jehovah and to substitute any other, but that instead of the altar made according to a divine pattern there should be used one of a fashion which pleased himself, and which would shew to the Assyrians that he was not unfavourable to their divinities.

14. *And he brought &c.*] The R.V. adheres to the Hebrew order. **And the brasen altar which was before the Lord, he brought from the forefront of the house.** This brasen altar is described 2 Chron. iv. 1, its length and breadth being each twenty cubits, and its height ten cubits. It is also mentioned, but not described, 1 Kings viii. 64. This altar, placed in its position when the temple was built, and standing exactly in front of the porch and entrance to the temple, Ahaz now removed.

from between the [R.V. **his**] *altar and the house*] At first the new altar was set a little behind the brasen one, but on the same line as one looked at them from the temple-porch. This arrangement Ahaz changes, and taking away the brasen altar, he leaves his own in the front of the temple, and carries the older and more sacred altar to the north side of the new one. Thus they both stood in a line parallel to the front of the house, but the king's new altar had the place of honour, before the temple-doors.

north side of the [R.V. **his**] *altar*] As before.

15. *Upon the great altar*] By this name he distinguishes his own altar. We know nothing of its dimensions but we need not refer the adjective 'great' to the size of the structure. The king calls it so, because he means it to be the 'principal' altar. The same adjective is used for the 'eldest' among sons, and for the 'chief' among priests.

For an account of the burnt offering, which was accompanied also by a meal offering and a drink offering, see Exod. xxix. 38—42. These burnt offerings were offered, according to the original ordinance, every morning and every evening, and double as much on the Sabbath (Numb. xxviii. 9, 10). It would almost appear that in the time of Ahaz

the evening meat offering, and the king's burnt sacrifice, and his meat offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their meat offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice: and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire *by*. Thus did Urijah the 16
priest, according to all that king Ahaz commanded. And 17
king Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them; and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen that *were* under it, and put it upon a pavement

the Mosaic ritual was relaxed, and the burnt offering made in the morning and the meal offering in the evening. But this is not clear.

the king's burnt sacrifice] R.V. **offering**. The word is the same as in the previous clause, and in that which follows immediately.

all the blood of the sacrifice] The change made in the previous note was most needful, because here we have a different word, and one which is always rendered 'sacrifice'. The distinction between 'burnt offering' and 'sacrifice', of both which all the blood is commanded to be sprinkled on the new altar, is that in the former the whole animal was consumed in the fire, whereas in 'sacrifices', e.g. of peace offerings, only some portion of the victim was burnt, and the other parts eaten by the offerers.

and [R.V. **but**] *the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire* by] No doubt the verb here used is found in the sense of 'to inquire' after God and God's will, as in Ps. xxvii. 4 'to inquire in His temple', though in that verse some render 'to consider' 'to look with pleasure upon'. But Ahaz was not minded to do any such thing. He was casting away Jehovah's worship as fully and as fast as he could. It seems better therefore to render these words 'but as regards the brasen altar it shall be for me to inquire', i.e. I will see later on what shall be done with it. The Vulgate renders '*paratum erit ad voluntatem meam*', i.e. it shall be used as I hereafter decide. So the verb is found in Prov. xx. 25, 'It is a snare...after vows to make inquiry', i.e. to deliberate and consider whether they shall be paid or not. The LXX. has read the verb with different vowel points and renders it 'for the morning' (εἰς τὸ πρωΐ).

17. *Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases*] For a description of these bases, which were moveable stands to carry the lavers used for the sacrifices, see 1 Kings vii. 27—39. The borders were of highly wrought ornamental work, made by Hiram of Tyre for king Solomon.

removed the laver from off them] i.e. From each of them. There were ten bases, with a laver on the top of each one.

and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen] This sea was also the work of Hiram. See 1 Kings vii. 23—26. It was supported by twelve oxen, three looking each way, and standing with their tails beneath the huge vessel. Ahaz took these beautiful castings away and allowed the sea to rest upon stone supports. As all these acts are in

18 of stones. And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, and the king's entry without, turned he *from* the house of the LORD for the king of Assyria.

the next verse said to be done 'because of the king of Assyria' we may suppose that Tiglath-pileser was disposed to ask for the beautiful things which he saw, and as it was not in Ahaz's power to say him nay, the king removed these treasures that the Assyrian monarch might not see and ask for them.

18. *And the covert* [R.V. the covered way] *for the sabbath*] The noun, which occurs nowhere else, signifies some colonnade along which the king could pass when on the sabbath he went to the temple. It is not mentioned in the description of the temple building, and must have been added afterwards, and most likely was richly adorned.

that they had built in the house] i.e. in the temple court, not in the interior of the temple-building.

and the king's entry without] This is perhaps the 'ascent' mentioned 2 Chron. ix. 4 and which called forth the great admiration of the queen of Sheba. We may be sure it was made as beautiful as Solomon's workmen and wealth could make it. This was outside the temple precincts but perhaps was closely joined to the covered way before mentioned so that the whole of the king's progress might be made in private.

turned he from [R.V. unto] *the house of the Lord*] There is considerable difficulty in this clause. One thing however is clear, that 'from' cannot be correct. The accusative is the case of direction, and there is no preposition expressed in the original. Hence 'unto' must be the sense. The A.V. seems to have intended to describe the removal or alteration of these two passages so as to separate them from the temple, the R.V., which gives in the margin 'round', appears to imply that both the erections, the one from the palace to the temple area, the other within the court, were brought into closer proximity to the temple-building. But the verb rendered 'turned' signifies 'changed' also, and it seems not unlikely that it refers to an alteration made in these colonnades similar to that which had been made with the bases and the brasen sea. From them all the decorative portion had been taken away lest it should excite the cupidity of the Assyrian. And in the richly decorated ascent and covered way a like dismantling took place and for a like reason. If this be the sense, then 'unto the house of the Lord' must be taken as an adverbial clause explaining that the removal of ornaments and gold took place throughout the whole length, even up to the very temple building.

for [R.V. because of] *the king of Assyria*] The preposition = literally 'from the face of' is a form constantly employed after verbs of fleeing (Gen. xvi. 8), of seeking help (Is. xix. 20) and so of fearing, humbling oneself, trembling, &c. This is its sense here. Ahaz did what he did, because he was fearful that otherwise the Assyrian king would seize on all that was choicest. The tribute already claimed had doubtless been large, and the subject monarch though glad of his deliverance from

Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they 19
not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of
Judah? And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried 20
with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son
reigned in his stead.

Rezin and Pekah, felt that the drain on his resources ought to be allowed to extend no farther, if he could prevent it. We need not suppose that Tiglath-pileser was about to come in person to visit Jerusalem. His emissaries were sure to be there, and the report of existing treasure was sure to give rise to enlarged demands.

19, 20. DEATH OF AHAZ. HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH. (2 Chron. xxviii. 26, 27.)

19. *the rest of the acts of Ahaz*] The Chronicler gives us somewhat more detail concerning the doings of this king. 'He gathered together the vessels of the house of God, and cut them in pieces: he shut up the doors of the house of the Lord, and made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem, and in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods, and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers.' Some part of this conduct may have been to satisfy the demands of the conqueror to whom he had become a vassal; but much of it was due to the love for foreign idolatry, for Baal and Rimmon and Moloch and the excesses which attended on their worship.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah] In 2 Chron. xxviii. 26 we are referred to the record of Israel as well as of Judah, and the war with Pekah would no doubt form a large chapter in the history of the former kingdom.

20. *was buried with his fathers*] The last three words are not represented in the LXX., and the Chronicler says 'they buried him in the city, even in Jerusalem, but they brought him not into the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.' For bodily leprosy Uzziah had been treated in the same way after death and the moral and spiritual leprosy of the idol-loving Ahaz was worthy of a like deprivation. 'Of all the kings of Judah hitherto, there is no one so dreadful an example, either of sin or judgment, as this son of good Jotham. I abhor to think that such a monster should descend from the loins of David. Where should be the period of this wickedness? He began with the high places...from thence he falls to a Syrian altar, to the Syrian god: then from a partnership, he falls to an utter exclusion of the true God, and blocking up of His temple, and then to the sacrifice of his own son; and at last as if hell were broken loose upon God's inheritance, every several city, every high place of Judah hath a new god. No marvel if he be branded (2 Chron. xxviii. 22) by the spirit of God with "This is that king Ahaz"' (Bp. Hall).

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah *began* Hoshea
the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.
2 And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD,
3 but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against
him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria; and Hoshea
4 became his servant, and gave him presents. And the king
of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea: for he had sent
messengers to So king of Egypt, and brought no present to

CH. XVII. 1—6. REIGN OF HOSHEA KING OF ISRAEL. SHALMANESER INVADES ISRAEL, IMPRISONS HOSHEA AND CARRIES THE PEOPLE CAPTIVE. (Not in Chronicles.)

1. *In the twelfth year of Ahaz*...began *Hoshea...to reign*] This is one more evidence that there is error in the chronological statements. In xv. 30 Hoshea is said to have begun to reign in the twentieth year of Jotham. As in xv. 33 Jotham's reign is stated to have been only sixteen years, the two statements are contradictory. Moreover we find that Pekah was not slain in Jotham's reign, but was an active monarch in the days of Ahaz. The reconciliation of the various statements is full of difficulty. See chronological notice.

2. *but not as the kings of Israel that were before him*] We have no record of the doings of Hoshea, so as to specify in what points he was better than his predecessors. A long persistence in evil doing had however corrupted the whole nation, and the cutting short which had begun under the house of Jehu (x. 32) was now very nearly completed.

3. *Shalmaneser king of Assyria*] This king according to the Assyrian monuments succeeded Tiglath-pileser, and was succeeded by Sargon. His reign lasted from B.C. 727—722.

and Hoshea became his servant] Probably it was in this way that Hoshea made himself strong enough to attack Pekah, and to mount the throne. The wars of Israel in the days of Pekah must have weakened the kingdom excessively, and made external help a necessity for any one who came to the throne.

and gave [R.V. **brought**] *him presents*] The word for 'presents' is that which came to be used for the 'meal-offering' of the Israelites. It is used euphemistically here for a gift which, though given with the appearance of free will, was no doubt compulsory, and of the nature of tribute.

4. *found conspiracy in Hoshea*] No doubt the tributary princes were watched by Assyrian residents in their courts, and the news of negotiations with a foreign power would soon be sent from Samaria to Shalmaneser.

to So king of Egypt] The LXX. writes the king's name Σηγώρ. The identification of this monarch is somewhat doubtful. The most probable supposition is that he is the same with either Shebek or Shebetek, the first and second kings of the Ethiopian twenty-fifth dynasty. By Manetho this king is named Sabachon, and in the

the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year: therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him *in* prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, 5 and went up *to* Samaria, and besieged it three years. In 6 the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah

Assyrian records (Smith, *Assyrian Canon*, p. 126) there appears an Egyptian general, whose name is represented as *Sibakhi* or *Sibahe*. He is represented as helping the king of Gaza against Assyria and being overthrown. This may be the person here spoken of. We can see at any rate that Egyptian influence extended as far as Palestine at this period, and therefore that Hoshea might very likely be tempted to seek aid in that quarter in the hope that he would find a less grasping superior lord than Shalmaneser.

and brought [R.V. **offered**] *no present*] As the word for 'present' here and in verse 3 is the usual one for the 'meal-offering' (see note above) so the verb employed here is that which is constant in the accounts of 'offering' sacrifices. Hence the change. The verb in its application to sacrifices is found Gen. viii. 20; xxii. 2; Exod. xxiv. 5, *et saepe*.

as he had done *year by year*] The LXX. has 'in that year'.

the king of Assyria shut him up] The LXX. gives ἐπολιόρκησεν αὐτόν, i.e. 'besieged him', referring the shutting up to the effect of a siege. But this sense is not warranted by the use of the verb elsewhere. Cf. Jerem. xxxiii. 1; xxxvi. 5; xxxix. 15, which all refer to imprisonment.

5. *throughout all the land*] It seems to have been the usual plan of invaders to overrun the places more easily conquerable before they assailed the chief stronghold.

besieged it three years] Samaria from its position on a hill and from the pains bestowed on its building must have been a city of considerable strength for those days. It seems from the records that the city was not taken by the Assyrians during the reign of Shalmaneser, but in the beginning of the reign of Sargon his successor. See Smith, *Assyrian Canon*, p. 201. In view of this statement the language of the Bible is very remarkable. At the beginning of this chapter the movements are ascribed to Shalmaneser, but in verse 6 it is only said 'the king of Assyria took Samaria'. And when the subject is mentioned again xviii. 9, 10, though stating that 'Shalmaneser came up against Samaria and besieged it', he continues 'and at the end of three years *they* took it', thus, though apparently quite undesignedly, giving support to the chronology which is established by the monuments. See note there.

6. *in Halah*] Most likely this is the district which Ptolemy calls Χαλκῖτις. It lies directly north from Thapsacus between Anthemusia and Gauzonitis.

and in Habor] Habor is the river still known as the *Khabour*, which

and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh
8 king of Egypt, and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel,
9 which they had made. And the children of Israel did secretly *those* things that *were* not right against the LORD

flows through Gauzonitis, and empties itself into the Euphrates at Circesium. Hence 'on Habor, the river of Gozan', would be a better rendering of the Hebrew. For we do not know of a place called Habor.

by [R.V. **on**] *the river*] There is no preposition in the original, it is therefore better to take 'the river of Gozan' as in apposition with Habor.

7—23. THE SINS FOR WHICH ISRAEL WAS CARRIED INTO CAPTIVITY. (Not in Chronicles.)

7. *For* so *it was that*] R. V. **And it was so because.** A better form of introduction to this account of the causes of the captivity. These are recited under three heads. First, on entering Canaan Israel adopted the idol worship of the people of the land, and would not listen to the warnings of God's prophets. Secondly, the ten tribes made the molten calves, and thirdly, they adopted the worship of Baal and Moloch and other idolatries from the more distant people, and indulged in all the practices of divination and enchantment which were attendant on these heathen forms of worship.

which had [R.V. omits *had*] *brought them up*] This omission makes the clause refer, as it does in the Hebrew, exactly to the same time as 'whom the Lord cast out' in the following verse.

8. *and walked in the statutes of the heathen*] The book of Judges is full of instances of the way in which the people again and again fell away to the practices of the Canaanites (cf. Judges ii. 11—13).

and of the kings of Israel, which they had [R.V. omits *had*] *made*] i.e. In the statutes of the kings of Israel. Such are the ordinances of Jeroboam the son of Nebat about the calves in Dan and Bethel, and the worship of Baal, which Ahab and Jezebel introduced.

9. *And the children of Israel did secretly*] The verb here used occurs nowhere else in the Bible, though one apparently cognate, and differing only by a single letter, is found several times. This latter is used of covering the head, and also of covering walls with gold to look more beautiful than the bare stone would do. From the first notion comes the sense 'they did secretly' which both A.V. and R.V. prefer. Others, with the LXX. (ἡμφιέσαντο), think that the meaning probably is 'they decked out' their worship, employed things alien to the sim-

their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And 10
they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree: and there they burnt incense in all 11
the high places, as *did* the heathen whom the LORD carried away before them; and wrought wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger: for they served idols, whereof the LORD 12
had said unto them, Ye shall not do this thing. Yet the 13
LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your

plicity of the Mosaic ordinances, *viz.* the high places, pillars and Asherim of which mention is made in the next clauses.

from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city] This seems a sort of proverbial expression. It is found again xviii. 8. The towers, in which watchmen were stationed to keep guard over the flocks and crops, were always in the most lonely and deserted spots, while fenced cities implied the presence of many inhabitants. So the sense appears to be 'in the loneliest as well as in the most populous places'.

10. *images and groves...*] R. V. **pillars and Asherim upon.** On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the Asherim, which were probably wooden images of a goddess Asherah, see on xiii. 6.

11. *as* did *the heathen*] R.V. **the nations.** And so again in verse 15. When a distinction is to be marked between God's people and idolaters, 'heathen' is a fair rendering for *goyim*. But here when there is no such marked severance 'nations' is the better translation.

12. *idols, whereof the Lord had said*] The prohibition is given in the Ten Commandments (Exod. xx. 4) and repeated in many parts of the Law (cf. Deut. iv. 16; v. 8; xxvii. 15).

Ye shall not do this thing] The LXX. adds 'unto the Lord' τῷ κυρίῳ. This addition, though unsupported by the Hebrew, is in harmony with Deut. xii. 31, where after a warning against the practices of the heathen, it is added, 'Thou shalt not do so *unto the Lord thy God*'. Cf. also Deut. xii. 4. The golden calves were set up by Jeroboam as a form of worship to Jehovah.

13. *the Lord testified against* [R.V. **unto**] *Israel and against* [R.V. **unto**] *Judah*] The preposition is that which is usually rendered 'in'. And God's witness by His prophets was at first a witness of warning and exhortation, and his anger was long restrained and not at first grievously kindled against them.

by all the prophets, and by *all the seers*] R.V. **by the hand of every prophet and of every seer.** The R. V. has translated the consonants in the word which is rendered by A. V. 'prophets' but has divided them differently. As the A.V. has taken them there is no conjunction 'and' expressed, but by dividing the consonants in a different way the word becomes='prophet and'. Thus the sense and grammar are complete, which they were not before.

Turn ye from your evil ways] For the language cf. Jer. vii. 3;

evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers,
14 and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the
15 LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and *went* after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged
16 them, that *they* should not do like them. And they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, and made them molten images, *even* two calves, and made a grove, and
17 worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And

xviii. 11; xxv. 5; xxvi. 13; xxxv. 15. But the same message was in substance preached by every one of the prophets from Samuel to Malachi.

by my servants] R. V. **by the hand of my servants.** As in the earlier part of this verse and again in verse 23, this Hebraism is preserved by the Revisers. It has become so rooted in the Biblical language of our country that there is no need to avoid a literal rendering of it.

14. *hardened their necks*] R. V. **neck.** The original has the singular, the people being regarded as one body. Israel throughout the Scripture is constantly reproached as a 'stiffnecked' people. Cf. Exod. xxxii. 9; xxxiii. 3; Deut. x. 16; Acts vii. 51 and parallel passages.

that did not believe] R.V. **who believed not.** The relative is thus connected a little more clearly with its proper antecedent 'fathers'.

15. *he testified against* [R.V. **unto**] *them*] See above on verse 13.

they followed vanity] 'Vanity' is constantly employed in Scripture of false gods. They are nothing and can do nothing. Therefore to have regard unto them is of no avail, and their worshippers in consequence use prayer in vain to them.

the heathen [R.V. **the nations**] See above on verse 11.

16. *And they left* [R.V. **forsook**] *all the commandments*] The R.V. adopts the most usual rendering of the verb, which is stronger in such a combination than 'left'. It is noteworthy that the sin of the calves is connected with the casting away of all the divine law. As soon as any other object is set up instead of God, all that He values has perished from man's worship.

a grove] R.V. **an Asherah.** See above on verse 10.

and worshipped all the host of heaven] On the temptation to this worship of the heavenly bodies, and its prohibition, cf. Deut. iv. 19; xvii. 3. See also what is said of Hezekiah's and Josiah's reformations. That God's people did fall into this sin we know from

they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger. Therefore the LORD was very angry with 18
Israel, and removed them out of his sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only. Also Judah kept not the 19
commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. And the LORD rejected 20
all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until *he* had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and 21
they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam

Jerem. viii. 2; xix. 13; Zeph. i. 5. Most likely it was introduced through the communications of Ahaz with Assyria.

17. *to pass through the fire*] Of the character of this Moloch-worship, see above xvi. 3, note.

used divination and enchantments] The former word probably refers to some way of seeking out guidance by lots, or by arrows with different marks on them, and the words on the selected one were taken as a direction what to do (cf. Ezek. xxi. 21, 22). The latter word refers to omens derived from sights or sounds. This was the way in which Joseph used his divining cup (Gen. xliv. 5).

sold themselves to do evil] R.V. **that which was evil.** The phrase is used before of Ahab (1 Kings xxi. 25), who had assuredly been the leader of Israel into the worst of their idolatries.

18. *removed them out of his sight*] The language is accommodated to human ideas. God's eye was regarded as specially directed to the land of Canaan, where He had chosen to place His Name. So to be taken away from that land is a removal from His special oversight. By the 'tribe of Judah' is meant the kingdom. Cf. 1 Kings xi. 36.

19. *walked in the statutes of Israel*] Which were not of God's ordinance but of Israel's own devising. This was specially the case when the son of Jehoshaphat intermarried with a daughter of Ahab, and so brought in Baal-worship and its attendant abominations. The calf-worship however seems never to have come across the border, but to have remained in Israel.

20. *And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel*] The LXX. has 'And they rejected the Lord, and the Lord was angry with all the seed of Israel'.

the hand of spoilers] The first of whom, mentioned below, is Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who led them astray, and the next is the king of Assyria, who carried them captive. There were many spoilers between, but Jeroboam's act began the downward course, which ended in the captivity of Shalmaneser and Sargon.

21. *and Jeroboam drave*] The verb is found only here, but its sense is well established from a cognate verb with slightly different

drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a
22 great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins
of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them;
23 until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had
said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried
away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day.
24 And the king of Assyria brought *men* from Babylon, and
from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from

orthography. The commencement of the calf-worship was through Jeroboam, and no doubt he used every means in his power to constrain his subjects to follow in his ways. The frequently recurring phrase 'the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin' is justification enough even such a strong verb as 'to drive'.

22. *they departed not from them*] For among all the nineteen kings of Israel not one has a good character.

23. *as he had said by all his servants the prophets*] R.V. **as he spake by the hand of all his servants the prophets.** These were probably more numerous, in connexion with the northern kingdom than with the kingdom of Judah, and conspicuous among them were the great figures of Elijah and Elisha. The other prophets of Israel were Ahijah the Shilonite of the land of Ephraim (1 Kings xiv. 4), an anonymous prophet in Beth-el (1 Kings xiii. 11), Micaiah the son of Imlah in Samaria (1 Kings xxii. 10). Elijah was a Gileadite (1 Kings xvii. 1), and Abel-meholah, Elisha's birthplace, was in the tribe of Issachar (1 Kings xix. 16), Jonah was born at Gath-hepher in Galilee in the tribe of Zebulon (2 Kings xiv. 25), Nahum the Elkoshite was of Israel (Nah. i. 1), and probably Hosea also. The prophecy of Amos is concerning Israel, but he was born at Tekoah in Judah.

to Assyria unto this day] See above on ii. 22. The R.V. begins this last clause 'So Israel was' &c.

24—41. OF THOSE NATIONS WHICH WERE BROUGHT TO INHABIT SAMARIA, HOW THEY WERE PLAGUED WITH LIONS. THE MIXED CHARACTER OF THEIR RELIGION. (Not in Chronicles.)

24. *the king of Assyria brought* men *from Babylon*] These would most likely be the leaders of the colony as coming from the capital of the empire.

and from Cuthah] It is not certain what district is intended by this name. Some have thought that the country should be identified with that between the Euphrates and the Tigris, where a town *Cutha* is mentioned by early geographers and from which neighbourhood others of these colonists came. Others think 'Cuthæans' is another form of 'Cossæans', who were a tribe dwelling in the hills between Persia and Media, northward of the river Choaspes. The latter appears the more probable conjecture, but it remains only a conjecture.

and from Ava] R.V. **Avva.** This is without doubt the same place

Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. And *so* it was at the begin- 25
ning of their dwelling there, *that* they feared not the LORD: therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which slew *some* of them. Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria, 26
saying, The nations which thou hast removed, and placed

as *Ivah* (R.V. **Ivvah**) of xviii. 34 below. The place is not clearly identified, but opinions incline to make it the same as *Ahava*, which stood where the modern *Hit* does, on the Euphrates at some distance to the N.W. of Babylon.

and from Hamath] This was the well-known Syrian city on the Orontes, which we read of as recovered by Jeroboam II. (2 Kings xiv. 28, where see note) but which the Assyrians soon afterwards reconquered (2 Kings xviii. 34), and seem now to have brought some of its population southward to Samaria.

and from Sepharvaim] This place is mentioned also in xviii. 34 among cities which had been reduced to subjection by the Assyrians (cf. also xix. 13 and Is. xxxvii. 13). It is identified with the famous town of *Sippara* on the Euphrates, a little distance above Babylon. The LXX. writes the name Σεπφαρουαὶμ, which form favours this identification.

instead of the children of Israel] We are not from these words to suppose that all the Israelites were taken away. We know that in the later captivity of Judah, Jerusalem was never wholly left of its old inhabitants. We read in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9, in the days of Josiah, that there was still 'a remnant of Israel', and these must be taken to be the people left behind when their fellow-countrymen were for the most part carried away.

25. *the Lord sent lions among them, which slew* [R.V. **killed**] some *of them*] The word rendered 'slew' is not the same here as that in the next verse. This statement must be considered as the thought of the people themselves. How far it might also be shared by the writer of Kings we cannot know. These heathen people having regarded their own divinities as especially attached to certain places, would consider that Israel had also its own local deity. Him and His worship they were ignorant of, and when the wild beasts increased upon them it was a natural idea with them to regard the plague as inflicted by the god of the country. That wild beasts were not uncommon in the Holy Land at this period we can see from other places of the history, and when the land was less thickly populated, such beasts as remained would have more chance of multiplying.

26. *they spake to the king of Assyria*] Whose thoughts on such a matter would be in accord with their own, and who would therefore take steps that the colonists should be instructed in the worship of the local deity, as he and they would consider Jehovah to be.

thou hast removed] R.V. **carried away.** For the word in the original

in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land: therefore he hath sent lions among them, and behold, they slay them, because they know not the manner
27 of the God of the land. Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, Carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence; and let them go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land.
28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how
29 they should fear the LORD. Howbeit every nation made

is the same which is translated 'carried away' above in verse 11, and a different verb from that which is rendered 'removed' in verse 18.

the manner of the God of the land] i.e. The way in which he would desire to be worshipped. This must vary with the various attributes and characteristics which were assigned to the god of the place.

27. *one of the priests whom ye brought from thence*] The Assyrian king takes what he would believe to be the best step towards remedying the mischief. A priest of the Israelitish worship was clearly the right person to be sent. No doubt all the priests were among the population that had been carried away. Hence the few Israelites left behind would not be regarded as capable of instructing the new colonists. For among the heathen, 'the manner', i.e. the ceremonial and particular observances in performing worship, was the matter of highest import. The less spiritual the worship, the more it tends to lay weight on the 'manner' and mode of the worship. Hence the magnificence so usual in idolatrous countries. The LXX. does not represent the words 'one of the priests'.

let them go] The priest would not be expected to go alone. For such services as the king of Assyria had in his thoughts the person ministering must be attended by a body of minor people to add grandeur to the ceremonies.

and let him teach] The priest would naturally be the teacher. Hence we can see the reason of the change of number in the pronouns in this clause and the last.

28. *Then* [R.V. So] *one of the priests whom they had carried away*] We can see from this that the events here spoken of took place within a very limited time. The priest who had been taken away from Samaria was still alive, and in vigour enough to be selected to go back again and to undertake the office of a teacher among the heathen colonists.

came and dwelt in Beth-el] The place where one of the golden calves had been set up. The worship of these objects would be what the priest taught as the national worship of the ten tribes.

how they should fear the Lord] For the worship of the ten tribes was professedly a worship of Jehovah, though performed in a manner contradictory to His express commandment.

29. *Howbeit every nation made gods of their own*] When they

gods of their own, and put *them* in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt. And the men of Babylon made 30
Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites 31
made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their

beheld the calves of Dan and Bethel, they would see nothing higher in them than in their own objects of worship. So the adoption of the new form of worship would not draw them from the attachment to their earlier divinities.

the high places which the Samaritans] All was ready for the strangers to set up their idols in every place to which they came.

30. *Succoth-benoth*] This name of the deity of the Babylonians is probably (according to Rawlinson *Herod.* bk. i. p. 630) meant to represent the Chaldæan goddess *Zir-banit*, the wife of Merodach (*i.e.* Bel) who was specially worshipped in Babylon.

Nergal] The Assyrian or Babylonian god who answers to the classic Mars, the god of war. It is an argument for Cuthah being the place near Babylon between the Euphrates and the Tigris (see note on verse 24) that the city which stood there is found to have been specially devoted to Nergal, whose image we are here told was set up in Samaria by the men of Cuth.

Ashima] Jewish tradition explains this name as signifying a short-haired goat. Hence it has been thought that the divinity so called was a sort of oriental Pan, a god of shepherds and of the woods. But others think that in the name there is a trace of the Phœnician god Esmûn, who answers to Æsculapius, the deity that presided over medicine.

31. *And the Avites* [R.V. **Avvites**] *made Nibhaz*] Of Nibhaz (for which the LXX. gives a very different word, Ἐβλαζέρ) nothing is known with certainty. The Jewish commentators explain the word as connected with a root signifying 'to bark', and say that the idol was a human figure with a dog's head. The dog was worshipped, or rather some divinity represented with a dog's head, by the Egyptians. And the want of any better information forces us to be content with supposing that the explanation of the Rabbis may be correct. The varied form of the name in the LXX. seems however to throw doubt on the form *Nibhaz*.

and Tartak] The same Jewish tradition represents Tartak as worshipped under the form of an ass. But there is very little evidence that such a form was used anywhere as a representation of a divinity. The ass in hieroglyphics is the symbol of the Egyptian Typho, but there is no proof that Typho was worshipped under this form. Others suggest that the word is of Persian origin and signifies 'intense darkness'. Thus they arrive at the idea that Tartak represents the planet of ill-luck.

the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire] This was a species of Moloch-worship, and the names given to the divinities indicate this.

children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods
32 of Sepharvaim. So they feared the LORD, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places.
33 They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from
34 thence. Unto this day they do after the former manners: they fear not the LORD, neither do they after their statutes,

Adrammelech is explained as the male power of the Sun, and Anammelech as the female power. So that the worship of the Sepharvites would be that of the Sun-god. This agrees with what Berosus (*Frag.* 7) says in explanation of the name Sippara, which is identified with Sepharvaim. He calls it ἡλίου πόλιν, the city of the Sun.

32. *So they feared the Lord*] i.e. In the way in which their ideas of the worship of the local divinity demanded. This they did, says Bp Hall, 'not for devotion, but for impunity. Vain politicians to think to satisfy God by patching up religions...What a prodigious mixture was here, true with false, Jewish with paganish, divine with devilish... No beggar's cloak is more pieced than the religion of these new inhabitants of Israel. I know not how their bodies sped for the lions. I am sure their souls fared the worse for this medley. Above all things God hates a mongrel devotion. If we be not all Israel, it were better to be all Asshur. It cannot so much displease God to be unknown or neglected as to be consorted with idols'.

and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests] R.V. **and made unto them from among themselves priests**. See note on 1 Kings xii. 31. The word represented by 'lowest' means an 'end' or 'extremity', but the idea of the phrase is that the choice of these priests was made anywhere, from the whole mass of the nation, from all that was comprised in it between one extremity and the other. This was distinctly contrary to what the Jews had been taught, that the priests were to come exclusively from one tribe, and the high priests from a special family.

houses of the high places] Hence it seems that not an altar only, but a temple of some kind was erected on the high places.

33. *They feared the Lord*] It seems almost as if the writer had repeated this phrase here and in the previous verse, and afterwards in verse 41, in mockery of this spurious reverence on which Jehovah could set no value.

after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence] R.V. **from among whom they had been carried away**. The literal meaning of the latter words is 'from whence [men] carried them away'. The sense of A.V. has been given to the words because it was not noticed that the nominative to the verb was some indefinite noun, 'men', referring to the Assyrian power which had brought these foreigners from their homes and planted them in Samaria.

34. *they fear not the Lord*] i.e. This worship of Jehovah, merely because they regard Him as the local deity of the land, is no worship

or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the LORD commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel; with whom the LORD had made a covenant, 35
and charged them, saying, Ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them: but the LORD, who brought you up out of the land of 36
Egypt with great power and a stretched out arm, him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice. And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and 37
the commandment, which he wrote for you, ye shall observe to do for evermore; and ye shall not fear other gods. And 38
the covenant that I have made with you ye shall not forget; neither shall ye fear other gods. But the LORD your God 39
ye shall fear; and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies. Howbeit they did not hearken, but they 40

at all. God will not be served from policy. There need be no difficulty in understanding the words here in contrast to 'they feared the Lord' in verses 32, 33, 41. These latter express what the new colonists thought they were doing, and what they also thought to be enough. This verse expresses what the writer knew to be the truth as God regarded the service.

neither do they after their statutes] 'Their' refers by anticipation to 'the children of Jacob', who are mentioned at the close of the verse.

after the law and commandment] As the preposition is twice expressed in Hebrew, R.V. has **or after the commandment.**

whom he named Israel] See Gen. xxxii. 28.

36. *with great power and a stretched out arm*] R.V. inserts **with** after *and*, as there is the preposition in the original text.

and him shall ye worship] R.V. **and unto him shall ye bow yourselves.** The verb is the same which is so rendered in the verse before.

shall ye do sacrifice] R.V. omits *do*, as it is not given in 35 in the translation of this same verb.

37. *which he wrote for you*] The compiler of Kings considered, as we can gather from this expression, that 'the statutes and ordinances', even the whole Law, was written down for the Israelites, and was of divine origin. The quotations made above are found in Deuteronomy chapters iv., v. and vi. If the compiler be, in this passage, drawing, as he assuredly does in a large part of his work, from a record nearly contemporary with the events, we have here, from some writer of the days of Hezekiah and Isaiah, a number of quotations which shew that, in some form, the fifth book of Moses belongs to a time anterior to the date which recent criticism has assigned to it. If he be here but recording his own ideas, it is manifest that he himself had no doubt about the early origin of the Book.

40. *Howbeit they did not hearken*] From the recital of God's

41 did after their former manner. So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children: as did their fathers, *so* do they unto this day.

18 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of

covenant and testimony unto Israel, the writer now turns to the new colonists of Samaria. They had heard, from the priest sent to them, an account of the Lord the God of Israel, and of what He had done for His people. For though the priest was probably one of the ministers before the calves, he would point, through them, to the God who brought Israel out of Egypt. This the writer appears to think should have moved the newcomers to regard Jehovah as far above any local deity.

41. *both their children*] R.V. **their children likewise**. A change which makes a semicolon necessary at the end of the previous clause.

It would seem from this statement that the mixed population in Samaria adhered to their several forms of idolatry through several generations, though we know that on the return of the captive Jews from Babylon B.C. 534, their descendants claimed to be allowed to take part in the restoration of the temple. The concluding words of the verse 'so do they unto this day' may be, and most probably are, taken from a document of earlier date than the compilation of the books of Kings. These carry the history down to about B.C. 560. The time between that date and the earlier days, when the priest sent from Babylon began to teach them something about Jehovah, may be taken in round numbers at a century and a half or nearly so. In that period the document was written from which our compiler drew, and when its author wrote the Samaritans were still idolaters. Such changes as were wrought among them, till they were all agreed to accept as authoritative the five books of Moses, would come about very gradually. Yet even imperfect teaching about Jehovah produced its effect. The priest who came to them would be one of those who had ministered at Bethel or Dan. Yet from the calves he would teach them of the God who had led Israel from Egypt to Canaan, and even from such lessons they would be brought to see that Jehovah was more than any mere local divinity, and to desire to join with the people whom they saw Him bringing once more out of the land of their captivity.

CHAP. XVIII. 1—8. HEZEKIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE REIGNS WELL AND DESTROYS THE BRASEN SERPENT. SOME OF HIS SUCCESSES IN WAR. (2 Chron. xxix. 1—2.)

1. *in the third year of Hoshea*] In xvi. 2 we are told that Ahaz reigned sixteen years: in xvii. 1 that Hoshea began to reign in the twelfth year of Ahaz, and here that Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz in Hoshea's third year. We can see from this that the sixteen years of Ahaz must have been made up of fourteen complete years, and a broken year at the commencement, and another at the close of his reign. This makes Hezekiah to have been born when his

Elah king of Israel, *that* Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah *began* to reign. Twenty and five years old was he when 2
he *began* to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight 3
of the LORD, according to all that David his father did. He removed the high places, and brake the images, and 4
cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent

father was extremely young. He ascended the throne at twenty-five. Ahaz had done so at twenty (xvi. 2). Add to this a little more than fourteen years (say fifteen) for his reign. Thus his whole life must have been but thirty-five years; so that his son, according to this chronology, must have been born when Ahaz was ten years of age.

2. *His mother's name also* was *Abi*] R.V. **And his mother's name was Abi.** In Chronicles the name is given as Abijah.

3. *he did* that *which* was *right in the sight of the Lord*] The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxix. xxx. xxxi.) gives among the good deeds of Hezekiah some that are not noticed by the compiler of Kings. In the first year of his reign and in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. He gathered the priests and Levites together and made them purify themselves and cleanse the house of the Lord. Then the king commanded a solemn sacrifice to be made on the altar of the Lord, and made regulations concerning the musical services of the temple. After that in the second month he proclaimed a solemn passover to which he invited all who would come both of Judah and of Israel, and posts were sent out to spread the announcement of the approaching feast. Some in Israel mocked at this, but some out of the tribes of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulon came to passover in Jerusalem. The idolatrous altars in Jerusalem were all destroyed and cast into the brook Kidron. The feast was prolonged for a second seven days and there was great joy in Jerusalem. After this the altars in Judah and in Benjamin, as well as in some parts of the kingdom of Israel, were broken down. The king then made arrangements for the courses of the priests and Levites, and appointed the order of their work, and the tithes that should be paid for their support. Officers were also appointed to have the oversight of this tithe system, both of its collection and its distribution among the priests and Levites. All these reforms appear to have been made at the very outset of Hezekiah's reign. They embrace no doubt the matters mentioned in verse 4 below, but the Chronicler's detail gives a more lively picture of the activity in reformation, which marked the opening of the new reign.

4. *brake the images* [R.V. **pillars**] *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherah.** On the 'pillars' see note on iii. 2, and on the 'Asherah', which was probably the wooden image of a goddess so called, see on xiii. 6.

the brasen serpent] There can be no doubt that, after the cures

that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.
5 He trusted in the LORD God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor *any*
6 that were before him. For he clave to the LORD, *and* departed not from following him, but kept his command-
7 ments, which the LORD commanded Moses. And the LORD

wrought (Numb. xxi. 9) by looking at the serpent which Moses made, this object, the sacrament of so great a blessing, would be reverently kept, and though we have no mention of its preservation and bestowal, nor any notice of it till this passage, there is no reason to suppose that it would be allowed to become lost or to be broken in pieces. Some have thought that the object here spoken of was a serpent made after the fashion of that early one set up in the wilderness. But when the statement in the text is so plain, and the material in question so little perishable there can be no reason to suppose from the mere silence of Holy Writ about it, that the original serpent had disappeared.

for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it] The record does not tell us when this worship of the brasen serpent began. But in midst of the many objects set up to be adored in the degenerate days of some of the kings, the adoration of the brasen serpent would be counted among the most reputable. Having once commenced there was no chance of its cessation in times like those of the last king, Ahaz.

and he called it Nehushtan] It is perhaps better to take an indefinite word as nominative to the verb 'called': '*one* called it', i.e. 'it was called' as is given in the margin of R.V. The word *Nehushtan* meaning 'a piece of brass' or 'something made of brass' may either be taken as a term of contempt, in which case the people who used the name were those who with Hezekiah caused it to be destroyed; or it may be the name which had in process of time come to be applied by everybody to this brasen figure. The words for 'serpent' and for 'brass' are in Hebrew very much alike, and a word like 'Nehushtan' might very well come in that language to convey in the popular speech the whole idea of 'brasen serpent', and win its way to general acceptance.

5. *the Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel*] The usual change.

after him was none like him...nor any [R.V. **among them**] *that were before him*] The comparison is with individual kings. The plural expression of the latter half of this sentence in A.V. is correct.

6. and *departed not*] R.V. **he departed not.** Thus italics are avoided, and the emphasis of the verse seems to be strengthened.

which the Lord commanded Moses] Another indication that the compiler of Kings, or it may be the earlier authority from which he drew, accepted the Law as given by God to Moses. See also below in verse 12.

was with him; *and* he prospered whithersoever he went forth: and he rebelled against the king of Assyria, and served him not. He smote the Philistines, *even* unto Gaza, 8
and the borders thereof, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city.

And it came to pass in the fourth year of king Hezekiah, 9
which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it. And at the end of three years 10
they took it: *even* in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is* the

7. and *he prospered whithersoever he went forth*] By placing the last four words at the beginning of the sentence, the R.V. again gets rid of the italic *and*.

he rebelled against the king of Assyria] Ahaz had purchased Assyrian help against Rezin and Pekah [xvi. 7—9] and had become the vassal of Tiglath-pileser. No doubt the terms between the two nations were meant to continue in the reigns of the successors of Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser. The revolt of Hezekiah seems to have been made regardless of these terms. For when Sennacherib comes to attack him, he feels he must admit (verse 14) that he has offended, 'I have offended, return from me, that which thou puttest on me will I bear'.

8. *he smote the Philistines*, even *unto Gaza*] Gaza was the most southern of the five great towns of the Philistines, so that it is intimated that the whole land of Philistia was overrun by the king of Judah.

from the tower of the watchmen, &c.] See above on xvii. 9 note.

9—12. Israel finally carried captive by Shalmaneser. (Not in Chronicles.)

9. *Shalmaneser...came up against Samaria and besieged it*] Probably the negotiations with So king of Egypt had still gone forward (xvii. 4), and the tribute due from Israel to Assyria had continued to be unpaid.

and besieged it] Shalmaneser commenced the siege, but the city was not taken till the reign of his successor Sargon. (See Schrader *Cuneiform Inscriptions*, Engl. Trans. I. p. 266.)

10. *at the end of three years they took it*] The consonants of the word rendered 'they took it' might, if different vowel points were added to them, be translated 'he took it'. That the vowels for the plural form have been written by the Massoretes can only be the result of a long retained tradition. The history must have died out of their knowledge entirely, but the word had been read as 'they took it' from the earliest times, and in that form they recorded it when they added the vowels to make their reading clear to the eye. Notice has already been taken of the remarkable way in which the Biblical record, though containing no record that the commencement of the siege and its close were in different reigns, yet avoids here any mistake in the history by the use of the pronoun 'they'. See note on xvii. 6 above. The siege of

ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken.
11 And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria,
and put them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan,
12 and in the cities of the Medes: because they obeyed not the
voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant,
and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded,
and would not hear *them*, nor do *them*.

Samaria lasted from B.C. 724 to B.C. 722 and the capture was among the earliest events of Sargon's reign.

11. *did carry away Israel*] R.V. transposes the last two words that the order may be the same as in xvii. 6 where this verse appears almost word for word. On the changes made there and here in R.V., and on the geographical position of the places mentioned, see notes there.

12. *his covenant*, and [R.V. **even**] *all that Moses...commanded*] Thus R.V. avoids the italics.

the servant of the Lord] This name is often given to Moses in the earlier books. See Deut. xxxiv. 5, where it is found in the notice of his death. It is specially frequent in the book of Joshua. Cf. Josh. i. 1, 13, 15; viii. 31, 33; xi. 12, &c. In Chronicles also the title is used of him, see 2 Chron. i. 3; xxiv. 6, but in those books he is also called 'servant of God' (1 Chron. vi. 49; 2 Chron. xxiv. 9), and this form is found in Neh. x. 29; Dan. ix. 11; Rev. xv. 3.

hear them [R.V, **it**] *nor do* them [R.V. **it**] The change is required by reason of the previous alteration in the verse.

At this point terminates the Biblical history of the ten tribes. The people were for the most part carried away, and settled in various places in Assyria, and they never came again to their own land, which continued to be occupied by the settlers introduced by Shalmaneser. Of those who were removed, the most probable fate was that they became mixed up with the people of the various districts in which they were settled, and so their nationality was lost. Some of their descendants we can hardly doubt, joined themselves to their brethren of Judah in the later days when the two tribes also were carried captive by the same power. These would return when the captivity was at an end, and so we find notices in the later history of persons who were members of one or other of the ten tribes. That the number of the tribes was kept in mind we can see from the dedication service after the captivity (Ezra vi. 17), where among the sacrifices offered are 'twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel'. In greater or less proportion each tribe must have been thought to be represented at this service. In the Apocryphal books we have mention of the same service in nearly similar words (1 Esdr. vii. 8). Tobit (Tob. i. 1) was of the tribe of Naphtali. In the book of Judith (vi. 15) we read of Ozias the son of Micha of the tribe of Simeon, in St Luke (ii. 36) Anna the daughter of Phanuel is of the tribe of Asher, in Acts (xxvi. 7) the language of St Paul shews that members of the twelve tribes were believed to be existing among the Jews of Palestine and of the

Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Senna- 13
cherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities

Dispersion; to which twelve tribes St James (i. 1) also addresses his Epistle.

But on the strength of language such as is found in the 2nd book of Esdras (xiii. 39—50) where the writer speaks of the ten tribes as going forth into a country where mankind had never dwelt, and of their future restoration, various theories have from time to time been started about the discovery of the lost tribes. The words of Josephus (*Ant.* XI. 5, 2) have helped on such notions. He speaks of the Israelites, i.e. the ten tribes, as existing in his own day in countless myriads beyond the Euphrates. If this statement had been true we should most certainly have found some mention of the people in other writers, of which there is not the slightest trace. Isolated bodies of Jews have no doubt been discovered here and there in the east, but no such community as would answer to the notions, which prevailed early in the Christian era of a large host of Israelites existing in some remote country of the north-east. The latest development of this notion, viz., that the Anglo-Saxon race is identical with the ten tribes, is only the outcome of great ignorance both of history and language. But it does harm because the devout among unlearned persons often grasp at such an idea, and by their absurd clinging thereto bring ridicule upon the rest of their faith, and are also led away from a reasonable and earnest study of the word of God into fanciful interpretations whereby they strive to support their erroneous ideas.

13—16. SENNACHERIB, KING OF ASSYRIA, INVADES JUDAH. HEZEKIAH SUBMITS, AND PAYS A LARGE TRIBUTE. (2 Chron. xxxii. 1; Isaiah xxxvi. 1.)

13. *Sennacherib king of Assyria*] Sennacherib was the son of Sargon, but as it seems not the eldest, and only became heir to the throne in the year before his father's death. He is said to have begun his reign B.C. 705 and to have been murdered in 681. The operations against Hezekiah seem to have been only part of a larger campaign, which appears to have been directed against those states which were in alliance with Egypt. For the Assyrian troops had gone beyond Jerusalem, and were at Lachish when Hezekiah sent in his submission. According to the inscriptions Sennacherib had overrun Phœnicia and advanced along the coast to attack the cities of the Philistines. We can see from xix. 8, 9 that the Egyptian power was advancing from the south, and eventually caused more pressure to be put on Jerusalem by the Assyrians that they might reduce it if possible before aid arrived from Egypt. For we may be sure that Hezekiah in his attempt to shake himself free from Assyria had, like his neighbours, sought the friendship of the Egyptians.

all the fenced cities of Judah] These were subjugated first, that there might be no chance of help from them if it became necessary to assault the capital. With some cities of the Philistines already in

14 of Judah, and took them. And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish, saying, I have offended; return from me: *that* which thou puttest on me will I bear. And the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and
15 thirty talents of gold. And Hezekiah gave *him* all the silver that was found *in* the house of the LORD, and in the
16 treasures of the king's house. At that time did Hezekiah cut off *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD,

his hands, it would be easy for Sennacherib to overrun Judæa and capture the less fortified places.

14. *to Lachish*] On the situation and previous history of Lachish, see on xiv. 19. It was very close to Askelon, which is mentioned in the inscriptions as one of the places against which Sennacherib's expedition was specially directed. It is stated (2 Chron. xxxii. 9) that at this time Sennacherib besieged Lachish with all his power. So that it must have been a stronghold of some importance and perhaps a place likely to be of advantage in checking the approach of forces from Egypt, which were sure to be invited by those whom the Assyrians were attacking.

I have offended] It seems most natural to gather from this that Hezekiah had begun his movement for rebellion without any provocation from Assyria. The compact between Ahaz and Tiglath-pileser he would no doubt find galling, but his confession of a fault shews that he had attempted to withdraw his homage merely because he thought himself strong enough to do so. 'What, do we mince that fact which holy Hezekiah himself censures?...The comfort of liberty may not be had with an unwarranted violence. Holiness cannot free us from infirmity. It was a weakness to do that act which must be soon undone, with much repentance and more loss' (Bp Hall).

three hundred talents of silver] On the value of the talent of silver and of gold, see on v. 5. The amount exacted on this occasion is not so great as that taken by Pul from Menahem, which was a thousand talents of silver. But in the previous reign Ahaz (xvi. 8) had paid large sums to Assyria, so that Judah must at this time have been drained of resources, and even the king of Assyria could not have what was not there.

15. *all the silver that was found* in *the house of the Lord*] The like emptying of the treasuries both of the temple and of the king had been made a very few years before (xvi. 8) by Ahaz to purchase the alliance of Tiglath-pileser against Pekah and Rezin.

16. *cut off* the gold from *the doors of the temple*] Plainly shewing that there was a great scarcity of gold at this time. Hezekiah was the last man to have stripped the temple doors if there had been any other way of raising what was demanded. He had been rejoiced at the purification and adornment of the temple, and must have been very hard driven ere he consented to undo the work which he had so

and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and 17
Rab-shakeh from Lachish to king Hezekiah with a great

lately done. Josephus adds to the history (*Ant.* x. 1. 1) a link which may explain the events which follow in the next section. He says that Sennacherib had promised the ambassadors of Hezekiah to depart on the payment of the impost, but that when he had received the money he paid no regard to what he had promised, but sent his officers to attack Jerusalem. In this way the Biblical record of verse 17 may be joined on to the statements in verse 16. The Chronicler takes no notice of the payment of tribute to Sennacherib, and gives only an account of the siege of Jerusalem and its non-success. And this he does with much more brevity than the compiler of Kings or the parallel record in Isaiah.

17—25. THE ASSYRIAN ARMY SENT AGAINST JERUSALEM. RAB-SHAKEH'S ARGUMENTS FOR A SURRENDER OF THE CITY. (2 Chron. xxxii. 2—12; Isaiah xxxvi. 2—10.)

17. *the king of Assyria sent Tartan*] In the light of the record in Chronicles, which says nothing of the previous proceedings of Sennacherib, we must consider that there was but one expedition, and that first came Hezekiah's submission, which was unavailing, and then followed the advance upon Jerusalem. We can imagine many things which induced Sennacherib not to keep faith with Hezekiah, but most probably it was the movements of the Egyptians in the south. Finding that they were advancing he would resolve on attacking and reducing Jerusalem before they arrived, and would care nothing for former compacts. *Tartan*, as well as the other two names here given, is probably an official title. Tartan is found in Is. xx. 1, and the R.V. puts a note in the margin 'the title of the Assyrian commander in chief'. In that place it is the title of the officer sent by Sargon against Ashdod. As this title here stands first, we may suppose that he was the chief military officer, though Rab-shakeh was the spokesman. It would be more correct to say 'the Tartan'.

and Rabsaris] The word is Hebrew in form and signifies 'the chief of the eunuchs'. It may be some title which the Jews modified so as to make of it a Hebrew word. Clearly in this place it indicates some high official. It need not necessarily be a military person, but some one like a lord chamberlain, who came with the Tartan to add civil dignity to the military. Rab-saris is found in Jeremiah (xxxix. 3) among the titles of the princes of the king of Babylon.

and Rab-shakeh] This word also has a Hebrew form, and means 'the chief cup-bearer'. The title may have been preserved and attached to an office, when the duties from which it was originally given had ceased to be performed, and others had been imposed in their place. And the Hebrew writers may have represented in their own way the meaning of a title for which they had no proper equivalent.

host *against* Jerusalem. And they went up and came *to* Jerusalem. And when they were come up, they came and stood by the conduit of the upper pool, which *is* in the highway of the fuller's field. And when they had called to the king, there came out to them Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe,

with a great host] For Jerusalem was stronger than the other places in Judah which he had already captured, and news from Egypt-wards was perhaps such as to make haste urgent.

against *Jerusalem*] R.V. **unto Jerusalem.** The original has no preposition, but the accusative of direction.

they came and stood by the conduit] The Chronicler gives us details which shew that some time elapsed before the attack on Jerusalem was commenced. Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem. He therefore took counsel with his princes and blocked up all the water courses and fountains, so that the Assyrians should have as little water supply as possible. He also strengthened the fortifications, provided new weapons, and organized his forces. Then he gathered the people and encouraged them, so that they 'rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah'. All this had been done before the arrival of Rab-shakeh and his fellows.

the upper pool] This is probably what in 2 Chron. xxxii. 30 is called 'the upper watercourse of Gihon'. On 'Gihon' see note on 1 Kings i. 33. The locality is described, in the same words as here, in Isaiah vii. 3, so that it was a well-known spot. The pool was within the walls, but from it went a conduit to the fuller's field. The fuller's occupation was one which was carried on without the walls.

18. *And when they had called to the king*] i.e. Had made it known in some way to the warders that they had a message for the king.

Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, which was *over the household*] This is the man who is spoken of in such terms of praise by Isaiah (xxii. 20—25). There God, by His prophet, calls him 'my servant Eliakim' and declares that 'he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah' and that 'the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder'. The security of all things in his time is used by the prophet to prefigure a period of great blessing and peace. The office he held was a very dignified one, the highest under the king. It was held by Ahishar in Solomon's days (1 Kings iv. 6) and by Azrikam in the days of Ahaz (2 Chron. xxviii. 7), and the Hebrew word there employed to describe it (*nagid*) is one used of great rulers and princes, and marks the high position of the holder.

and Shebna [R. V. **Shebnah**] *the scribe*] The orthography of the name is varied in this chapter. In verse 37 it is written Shebna, but here and in 26 'Shebnah'. The R.V. in each case follows the Hebrew. This Shebnah had originally held the office which was at this time Eliakim's (Is. xxii. 15—19) but had been put down because of his luxury and also because he was a favourer of the alliance with

and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder. And Rab-shakeh 19
said unto them, Speak ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the
great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence *is* this
where*in* thou trustest? Thou sayest, (but *they are but* vain 20
words,) *I have* counsel and strength for the war. Now on
whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Now 21
behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed,

Egypt. This latter policy was always opposed by the prophets, and it was perhaps by Isaiah's influence that Shebnah had been reduced to the lower post of royal secretary.

Joah the son of Asaph the recorder] Joah is only mentioned in this narrative and the parallel chapter in Isaiah. His office was that of 'chronicler', so that he was a necessary member of the deputation sent to confer with the Assyrian envoys. Thus a faithful statement would be put on record of all that took place.

19. *Speak ye now to Hezekiah*] Their message was first addressed to the king, but afterwards they turn (verse 29) to the people who had gathered to hear the parley. The briefer record of the Chronicler combines both parts of the conference and says the messengers were sent 'unto Hezekiah...and unto all Judah that were at Jerusalem'.

the great king] Hezekiah would know that his own father Ahaz had been one of Assyria's tributaries, and that many other petty kings around were in the same condition. Hence the term is calculated to warn him against resistance.

What confidence is *this where*in *thou trustest*] The question in Chronicles, being represented as at once addressed both to king and people, is put in the plural number 'Whereon do *ye* trust'?

20. *Thou sayest, (but* they are but *vain words)*] Some have taken the words in the parenthesis as the object of the verb, so that the sense would be 'Thou speakest only vain words (when thou talkest about) counsel and strength'. But it is better to leave them as a parenthesis, because of the succeeding question Thou speakest of counsel and strength, whence are they to come? The literal meaning of the expression rendered 'vain words', i.e. a word of the lips, which is nothing but so much breath, is very forcible and is preserved on the margin both of A. V. and R. V. Instead of the italics '*I have*' R. V. inserts **There is.**

21. *Thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed*] Rab-shakeh answers his own question. It may be that he also is correct in saying that Hezekiah had hopes of help from Egypt. But in this the king would find no support from the prophets of the time. The figure of a reed is perhaps used by Rab-shakeh because Egypt produced them in abundance. A bruised reed, one which will crack, and offer jagged points at the broken part is used as a figure by Ezekiel concerning Egypt (xxix. 6), and the words exactly illustrate what Rab-shakeh would convey. 'They (the Egyptians) have been a staff of reed to the house of Israel. When they took hold of thee by thy hand thou didst break, and rend

even upon Egypt, on which if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt unto all
22 that trust on him. But if ye say unto me, We trust in the LORD our God: *is* not *that* he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and hath said to Judah and Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar in
23 Jerusalem? Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord the king of Assyria, and I will deliver thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon

all their shoulder: and when they leaned upon thee, thou brakest, and madest all their loins to be at a stand'. (Bp Hall.)

Pharaoh king of Egypt] Pharaoh is here used as the common title of the native kings of Egypt. Thus Rabshakeh disposes of external help.

22. *We trust in the Lord our God*] Probably Rab-shakeh knew something about the character of Egypt and her ability and likeliness to help. 'Rahab that sitteth still' (Is. xxx. 7 R. V.) was a name probably not undeserved. But now he enters on a matter which he does not understand. He had heard no doubt of the many altars and high places which Hezekiah had swept away in the beginning of his reign, and he might have been told by some, who murmured at their removal, and urged that Jehovah was really worshipped at them, that the king had put down many altars of the true God, and for a fancy of his own had ordered all his subjects to worship in Jerusalem. But he did not, probably could not, comprehend that the law of Jehovah had long before ordained that when His worship should be brought to its true form among His people, there should be only one temple for the whole land. Hence his argument is 'How can you expect Jehovah to help you, when you have been breaking down His shrines and limiting His worship to a single spot'?

23. *Now therefore, I pray thee, give pledges to my lord*] R. V. **my master.** The change conforms to verses 24 and 27 below. Having ridiculed any trust in Egypt, and expressed his opinion that Hezekiah could not expect help from Jehovah, after demolishing all the altars in the land, Rab-shakeh comes to his third argument. This is, 'you have no forces to resist us'. He puts this into the form of a taunt. The verb rendered 'give pledges', has in its simpler voice, the sense of 'mortgaging' or 'giving something in pledge'. In the present verse it appears to mean 'pledge yourself', 'put yourself under some penalty'. And so the taunt is equivalent to saying: 'You dare not undertake to find two thousand riders, if I offer you the horses for them. If you dare, then do it. The horses are ready; I challenge you to provide the men'.

I will deliver] R.V. **give.** The verb is the one usually rendered 'give', and the insult is made the greater by this proud way of expressing superiority.

them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one cap- 24
tain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust
on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen? Am I now come 25
up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The
LORD said to me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.
Then said Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, and Shebna, and 26
Joah, unto Rab-shakeh, Speak, I pray thee, to thy servants

24. *How then wilt thou, &c.*] Rab-shakeh impudently takes for granted that Hezekiah's only answer would be 'I have not the men'. So he proceeds with his insults, and points out what he deems the folly of resistance. 'We, three of the principal officers of our master, are come to treat with you. As your power is so feeble, you ought not to think of opposition, but to listen to the Assyrian proposals if they were brought even by some inferior person.' The word which in this verse is rendered 'captains' is that which is constantly used in Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther of the 'governors' of provinces belonging to the great king. Any one of these, Rab-shakeh intimates, would be a power by himself which Hezekiah ought not to despise, as he possesses no men, even if the horses were made a present to him, out of which to form a body of cavalry. When Assyria can be so liberal in offers of horses, and when even her smallest governors are so well equipped with troops, is it not folly to go to Egypt for chariots and horses? He knows, and intimates that the same kind of vassalage would be required by the king of Egypt, as the king of Assyria demands.

Some have taken the verb 'wilt thou turn away' as equivalent to 'wilt thou defeat and put to flight'. But this seems to suit very badly with the concluding clause of the sentence. 'To put trust in Egypt' is a good antithesis to the rejection of a proposal from the side of Assyria, but not to the defeat of the Assyrian troops.

25. *Am I now come up without the Lord*] Rab-shakeh goes one step further, and with a bold assertion claims Jehovah's support. Perhaps he thought his lie would receive some credence because he had already been able to reduce the towns all round Jerusalem. And if it did, one great stay of the king's courage would be broken down. 'How fearful a word was this. The rest were but vain cracks: this was a thunderbolt to strike dead the heart of Hezekiah. If Rab-shakeh could have been believed, Jerusalem could not but have flown open' (Bp Hall). Rab-shakeh would know and use the name of the God of Israel, without regarding Him otherwise than as a local deity, just as Asshur was of Assyria.

26—37. FURTHER INSOLENCE OF RAB-SHAKEH. HE ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE THAT STAND ON THE WALL. DESPAIR OF HEZEKIAH'S MINISTERS. (2 Chron. xxxii. 13—19; Isaiah xxxv. 11—22.)

26. *Speak, I pray thee...in the Syrian language*] The language intended is more properly named, as in the margin of R.V. 'Aramæan'

in the Syrian language; for we understand *it:* and talk not with us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that
27 *are* on the wall. But Rab-shakeh said unto them, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? *hath he* not *sent me* to the men which sit on the wall, that *they* may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss
28 with you? Then Rab-shakeh stood and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spake, saying, Hear the
29 word of the great king, the king of Assyria: Thus saith the king, Let not Hezekiah deceive you: for he shall not be able to
30 deliver you out of his hand: neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, The LORD will surely deliver us, and this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the

This was the language of Mesopotamia and Babylon. It was of the same family as Hebrew, but yet not commonly understood by the people of Judæa. The court officials would of necessity have to speak it for the purposes of political intercourse. 'Syriac' is a later dialect of Aramæan. For 'talk not' R.V. has **speak not.** The original word is the same as in the previous clause. By their request Eliakim and his companions at once put themselves at Rabshakeh's mercy, and he shewed them none. 'Lewd men are the worse for admonitions. Rab-shakeh had not so strained his throat to corrupt the citizens of Jerusalem, had it not been for the humble obtestation of Eliakim. Now he rears up his voice and holds up his sides, and roars out his double blasphemies' (Bp Hall).

the people that are *on the wall*] There had gathered a crowd around Hezekiah's ministers to hear the issue of the conference, and these from their previous sufferings in the siege would be ready enough to put a favourable construction on Rab-shakeh's argument. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 11) represents him as employing the powerful argument to starving men 'Doth not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst'? This is the fearful extremity which is so coarsely alluded to in the words of the next verse. That such food had been used by persons reduced to extremity in a siege, see above chap. vi. 25 and the note there.

28. *with a loud voice*] To prove that it was to the people on the wall that his message was sent. If he could provoke them to desert their king, Jerusalem would soon be in the power of the Assyrians.

29. *out of his hand*] The natural expression would be 'out of *my* hand'. And so it is rendered in all the versions but the Chaldee. It is worth noting that in Isaiah these words are not expressed.

30. *this city shall not be delivered*] R.V. **given.** The Hebrew word is not the same as that rendered 'deliver' in this verse and the previous one. It is desirable that the difference should be made plain to the English reader.

king of Assyria. Hearken not to Hezekiah: for thus saith 31
the king of Assyria, Make *an agreement* with me *by* a present,
and come out to me, and *then* eat ye every man of his own
vine, and every one of his fig tree, and drink ye every one
the waters of his cistern: until I come and take you away to 32
a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land
of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey,
that ye may live, and not die: and hearken not unto Heze-
kiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver
us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his 33
land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where *are* the 34
gods of Hamath, and of Arpad? where *are* the gods of

31. *Make* an agreement *with me* by *a present*] R.V. **make your peace with me.** The noun is that which is often rendered 'blessing' in the sense of a 'present' (see note on v. 15 above). And there is no example in the Bible exactly parallel to this. But the cognate verb is used of salutations (e.g. iv. 29), 'If any man *salute* thee', literally 'bless thee', 'wish thee peace'. Hence it is not difficult to see how such a noun would come to have the sense of 'peace', exactly like *shalôm*, which is the more usual word in such salutations.

and come out to me] i.e. Open your gates and submit yourselves instead of staying within to die of starvation.

and then [R.V. omits then] *eat ye every man* [R.V. **one**] *of his own vine*] Cf. above 1 Kings iv. 25 where the description applies to the most prosperous days of the reign of Solomon.

cistern] This was a pit or well dug for collecting water, not the sort of manufactured tank to which the name is now usually given.

32. *until I come and take you*] Submission was to be followed, as was usual with Assyria, by deportation, but the people are promised a land as good as their own. For the similar description of the land of Canaan see Deut. viii. 7—9.

and not die] Again he refers, as to an argument likely to be most powerful, to the famine which was imminent if the siege continued.

33. *Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all*] R.V. **ever delivered.** So that it is clear that Rab-shakeh, in spite of his language in verse 25, counted Jehovah as but one among the many local deities which were supposed specially to belong to one city or one country.

34. *gods of Hamath, and of Arpad*] Of *Hamath*, see above on xvii. 24. *Arpad* is always spoken of in connexion with Hamath, but the site of the place has not been determined, nor any trace of the name found except in the Bible (2 Kings xix. 13; Jerem. xlix. 23; Is. x. 9; xxxvi. 19; xxxvii. 13). In the two last-named places A.V. writes the word *Arphad*, and the same spelling is found 2 Esdras ix. 26 as a various reading for Ardath. From the passage in Jeremiah above quoted it is manifest that like Hamath, it belonged to Damascus, for it is included in the prophecy concerning that city. The chief god of Damascus was Rimmon.

Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah? have they delivered Samaria
35 out of mine hand? Who *are they* among all the gods of the
countries, that have delivered their country out of mine
hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem out of mine
36 hand? But the people held their peace, and answered him

the gods of Sepharvaim] See above, on xvii. 31.

Hena] The LXX. represents the name by Ἀνὰ. From the combination of the gods of Sepharvaim with those of the other two places here mentioned, we should gather that the worship in all three was the same. This gives support to the conjecture which identifies Hena with *Ana*, a city not far from Sepharvaim. Other opinions favour the identification of the place with *Anat*, an island in the Euphrates, near its union with the *Khabour*. This also would be not very remote from Sepharvaim.

and Ivah] R.V. **Ivvah**. This place is supposed to be the same with *Ava* (R.V. **Avvah**) in xvii. 24 above, where see note. If it be identified, as has been suggested, with *Ahava*, all the three places lie close together. 'Hena' and 'Ivah' are omitted from the parallel passage in Isaiah.

have they delivered Samaria] Among the gods of the countries, the gods of Samaria have been in Rab-shakeh's thoughts though he has not expressly spoken of them. But here, as if he had done so, he asks: Have they delivered Samaria?

35. *that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem*] Rab-shakeh should have had a better memory. In verse 25 he said he had the Lord's command to destroy Jerusalem; but here, forgetful, he speaks of the same Lord as one who might be expected to defend it.

Or does he only speak *ex concesso*, taking the ground of those whom he addresses? *They* thought the Lord would deliver. 'If you do think so', would then be his meaning, 'what reason have you for your belief'?

36. *the people held their peace*] Rab-shakeh had hoped to excite the people, at all events, to some expression of discontent, and perhaps had any movement of that kind been displayed, the 'great host' of verse 17 would at once have begun the attack, for treason within the city might have opened the gates. But the expectation is utterly disappointed, even the fear of starvation provokes no treachery.

Bp Hall observes here, 'I do not more wonder at Hezekiah's wisdom in commanding silence, than at the subjects' obedience in keeping it. This railer could not be more spited, than with no answer; and if he might be exasperated he could not be reformed. Besides, the rebounding of those multiplied blasphemies might leave some ill impressions in the multitude. This sulphurous flask, therefore, dies in his own smoke; only leaving a hateful stench behind it'.

The Chronicler, though his account is briefer, yet describes in more terrible terms the blasphemies of the Assyrian envoy. Not only does he mention his language to those who came to hear him, but he adds 'he wrote also letters to rail on the Lord, the God of Israel, and to speak against Him...and they spake against the God of Jerusalem, as

not a word: for the king's commandment was, saying, Answer him not. Then came Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, 37
which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder, to Hezekiah with *their* clothes rent, and told him the words of Rab-shakeh.

And it came to pass, when king Hezekiah heard *it*, that 19
he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went *into* the house of the LORD. And he sent Eliakim, 2
which *was* over the household, and Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Esai the prophet the son of Amoz. And they said unto him, 3

against the gods of the people of the earth which were the work of the hands of man'. (2 Chron. xxxii. 17, 19.) Perhaps he is alluding to the letter mentioned below (xix. 14).

37. *with* their *clothes rent*] See note on Chap. v. 7.

CH. XIX. **1—7.** HEZEKIAH SENDS MESSENGERS TO ISAIAH. ISAIAH'S ANSWER IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. (Not in Chronicles. Isaiah xxxvii. 1—7.)

1. *Hezekiah...covered himself with sackcloth*] No doubt the words which his messengers reported were such as to tell upon the king, especially that saying of Rab-shakeh 'The Lord said unto me, Go up against this place and destroy it'. The king was struck with horror as much as his counsellors. But he feels that he has in his council one who has long been known as God's messenger to Judah. So while he himself falls to humiliation and prayer, going for that purpose into the house of the Lord, he sends his servants to enquire of the prophet what hope there is amid the terrible attack which may very soon be upon them.

2. *he sent...to Esai*] R.V. Isaiah. The historian has up to this time never mentioned the name of the great prophet. But we know from Isaiah's own writings that as early as the reign of Uzziah (Is. vi. 1) the Lord had revealed His majesty to the son of Amoz, and had sent him to bear witness unto Judah. The reigns of Jotham and Ahaz are past, and to the latter king Isaiah had brought the message of deliverance from Pekah and Rezin, which had been fully accomplished, so that Ephraim was now broken and was no more a people (Is. vii. 8). We may be sure that one so endowed with insight into the divine will had been taken at once into the councils of Hezekiah, and that no one's words had carried more weight. It may well be that Isaiah had advised the struggle for freedom which Hezekiah undertook, and certainly during the fourteen years (2 Kings xviii. 13) which had elapsed since Hezekiah came to the throne the God-fearing king had done much, may we not say most things, by the advice of the prophet. Hence when the days are darkest, it is to Isaiah he sends as the source of true light.

Thus saith Hezekiah, This day *is* a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and blasphemy: for the children are come to the
4 birth, and *there is* not strength to bring forth. It may be the LORD thy God will hear all the words of Rab-shakeh, whom the king of Assyria his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the LORD thy God hath heard: wherefore lift up *thy* prayer for the
5 remnant that are left. So the servants of king Hezekiah
6 came to Isaiah. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, *with* which the servants of

3. *This day* is *a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy*] R.V. contumely. The words refer to the condition of Hezekiah and his people. First they are in great anguish, kept in and surrounded by a threatening and mighty enemy, this is the trouble: then they are reminded of their offences and feel that for their wrong they are under chastisement and reproof: and lastly, that they are given over to the adversaries so that their enemies mock at their confidence with insolent derision. Hence without help from God, and with no hope from men, their conceptions of freedom and liberty were likely all to prove abortive, and come to no result. The figure which the king employs indicates that they were in the extremest danger, and had no power to save themselves.

4. *It may be*] The Hebrew word introduces expressions of uncertainty but yet of hope. Cf. Numb. xxiii. 3 where Balaam says to Balak, '*Peradventure* the Lord will come and meet me'; and Josh. xiv. 12 where Caleb entreats for the possession of Hebron, in hope to drive out the Anakim, '*If so be* the Lord will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out'. Hezekiah is sending to the only source of hope.

and will reprove R.V. [rebuke] *the words*] The verb is cognate with the noun rendered 'rebuke' in the previous verse. The ground on which Hezekiah pleads that God should interpose is not that he and his people have deserved such mercy, but that in what they suffer God's name and honour are blasphemed.

wherefore lift up thy *prayer for the remnant that are* [R.V. is] *left*] The cities round about had been for the most part reduced by Sennacherib's army. The feeble remnant is Jerusalem and its people. For these Hezekiah entreats Isaiah to intercede. The king knew from the experience of his father's reign how Isaiah had been chosen by God as His messenger. His prayer therefore he thinks will be of much efficacy. As to send to a mighty king by one who has near access to him is the surest way of making a want known, and obtaining relief.

6. *Be not afraid of the words which* [R.V. that] *thou hast heard,* with *which* [R.V. wherewith] &c.] These slight changes make the rendering like that in Isaiah, where the Hebrew corresponds exactly.

the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will 7
send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and
shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by
the sword in his own land.

So Rab-shakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria 8
warring against Libnah: for he had heard that he was

God's prophet sets down the threats and insults of Rab-shakeh as 'words' and no more. That there is a degree of contempt in the whole sentence is shewn in the words for 'servants' which is not the same as that so rendered in verse 6, but may be rendered 'young men' (the LXX has παιδάρια), not that Rab-shakeh and his comrades were young, but the words of Isaiah estimate their boasts and threatenings as 'young men's words'.

7. *Behold, I will send a blast upon him*] R.V. **put a spirit in him.** 'Blast' in this verse is often wrongly accepted as referring to the destroying angel of verse 35 below. The true sense is represented in R.V. God would give to Sennacherib and his soldiers such an inward motion or impulse that the news which should be brought to them should alarm them and drive them away. We know from Saul's history how an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him (1 Sam. xvi. 14). In another wise there should come a troubling spirit upon the Assyrians, which should make them ready to take alarm at anything. This is the sense of the LXX. δίδωμι ἐν αὐτῷ πνεῦμα. But the word for 'spirit' and for 'wind' being the same in both Hebrew and Greek some interpreters have thought that the allusion is to the blast, sound or noise which would bring the rumour alluded to in the next words. But this sense seems less likely than the former, and finds no illustration elsewhere.

and he shall hear a rumour] Probably refers to the report about the Ethiopian king, Tirhakah, spoken of presently, in verse 9 as on the march to meet Sennacherib. The answer of the prophet does not speak of the destruction of the host, an event which more than anything else hastened Sennacherib's departure.

and shall return to his own land] See below verse 36.

I will cause him to fall] Though the whole manner of God's intervention be not made known, enough is laid open to shew us that to the boastful Sennacherib God had already fixed his day. The two sons (verse 37) are the instruments, but they, though they know it not, are only working out God's design.

8—13. SENNACHERIB'S LETTER TO HEZEKIAH. (2 Chron. xxxii. 17; Isaiah xxxvii. 8—13.)

8. *So Rab-shakeh returned*] i.e. Southward, towards Lachish, but during his absence Sennacherib had undertaken to attack Libnah, and there Rab-shakeh found him.

Libnah] See above on viii. 22. Libnah was almost in a direct line eastward from Lachish.

9 departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah
king of Ethiopia, Behold, he is come out to fight against
10 thee: he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus
shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying, Let not
thy God in whom thou trustest deceive thee, saying, Jeru-
salem shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of
11 Assyria. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria
have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly: and
12 shalt thou be delivered? Have the gods of the nations
delivered them which my fathers have destroyed; *as* Gozan,
and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which

9. *And when he heard say of Tirhakah*] Tirhakah is called by Manetho, *Tarakos*. He was the third and last king of the xxvth dynasty, which was Ethiopian. The duration of his reign is not accurately known. The news of Tirhakah's advance caused Sennacherib to feel the importance of getting Jerusalem into his possession, seeing it was so much stronger than any position which he yet had. It had been a fortress of considerable importance in the time of the Jebusites (2 Sam. v. 6), and in the intervening period between David and Hezekiah its defences had been made much more complete.

he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah] This time they were the bearers of a letter (see below, verse 14) to the king. This may be the letter alluded to 2 Chron. xxxii. 17.

10. *Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying*] These words are unrepresented in the LXX.

Let not thy God...deceive thee] This was the sort of railing on the God of Israel, and the speaking against Him on which the Chronicler dwells so strongly.

Jerusalem shall not be delivered] R.V. given. The change brings this passage into conformity with Isaiah. Also as 'deliver' is used in the two following verses in a different sense, it is well that the word should be varied.

11. *by destroying them utterly*] The verb implies 'dooming', 'devoting as if to a curse'. Hence the LXX. represents it by *ἀναθεματίσαι*.

12. as *Gozan*] The R.V. omits the italic 'as' both here and in the parallel place in Isaiah. On *Gozan* see above xvii. 6 note.

and Haran] The LXX. gives for this place Χαρράν, as in Gen. xxvii. 43, thus identifying it with the place where Abraham dwelt after leaving Ur of the Chaldees. The town of Haran [still called *Harran*] is in the midst of the district which lies under Mt. Masius between the Khabour and the Euphrates.

and Rezeph] This name is found in several places in the neighbourhood of the Euphrates, where from the situation of the other cities mentioned with it, this Rezeph most likely was situated. Two places, one on the west and one on the east of the Euphrates have been put forward

were in Thelasar? Where *is* the king of Hamath, and the 13
king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, *of*
Hena, and Ivah?

And Hezekiah received the letter of the hand of the 14
messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up *into* the
house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. And 15
Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God

as the city here mentioned but we have no means of deciding more than that the place was not far distant from the others named along with it.

the children of Eden which were *in Thelasar*] R.V. **Telassar.** This latter form is the orthography of A.V. in the parallel verse in Isaiah. Of the position of this *Eden* it is impossible to say more than that it was probably somewhere in the north west of Mesopotamia, whither Assyrian conquest had spread in the times just preceding Sennacherib, and to which he would intend now to call attention. The LXX. omits this name in the parallel place in Isaiah. Telassar must have been the chief seat of these children of Eden, the capture of which broke down the people. In Ezek. xxvii. 23, Eden is again joined with Haran, and with Asshur. Hence some confirmation may be drawn for placing the people in the upper Mesopotamian plain.

All the places above named are additional to those given by Rabshakeh in his recital of Assyrian victories (xvii. 34).

13. *Where is the king of Hamath*] On all the places named here, see above in the notes on xvii. 34.

14—19. HEZEKIAH SPREADS THE LETTER BEFORE THE LORD, AND PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE. (2 Chron. xxxii. 20; Isaiah xxxvii. 14—20.)

14. *Hezekiah received the letter*] Though bringing a written document the messengers of Sennacherib may be supposed to have also enforced their message by words of their own.

went up into [R.V. **unto**] *the house of the Lord*] The change brings the words into exact likeness with the verse in Isaiah. It is not likely that the king entered the temple. He would go into no place which was set apart only for priests and Levites. It is more reasonable to suppose that standing at the porch he made his prayer towards the Holy of Holies to which he alludes.

spread it before the Lord] We are not to think of this act as intended by the king to exhibit the letter for the divine inspection. It was rather done that the object being present to his own sight, his prayer might be prompted thereby and rendered more fervent. The letter was no doubt in the Hebrew character, and the sight of its language would help his thoughts.

15. *And Hezekiah prayed before the Lord*] The Chronicler says 'Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven'.

of Israel, which dwellest *between* the cherubims, thou *art* the God, *even* thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth;
16 thou hast made heaven and earth. LORD, bow down thine ear, and hear: open, LORD, thine eyes, and see: and hear the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent him to
17 reproach the living God. Of a truth, LORD, the kings of
18 Assyria have destroyed the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire: for they *were* no

O Lord God [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel, which dwellest* between *the cherubims*] R.V. **which sittest upon the cherubim.** On the cherubim and their position above the ark, as the place where the divine presence was manifested and dwelt, see note on 1 Kings vi. 23.

thou art *the God*, even *thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth*] Sennacherib's letter had spoken of 'the gods of the nations'. Hezekiah contrasts his own faith in Jehovah with the false opinions of the heathen whose lands Sennacherib had overrun, and hence shews at once that he hopes that the fate of himself and his people will also be a contrast to theirs. In the next clause also he shews that the maker of all things must be the disposer of them all.

16. *Lord, bow down thine ear, and hear*] R.V. **Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear.** This is the translation in Isaiah of the same Hebrew. Both should be alike, and the form chosen by R.V. seems preferable as the words are addressed to God. The king can only speak in the figures which men would use to one another, but in this application of human attributes to the Almighty there need not be of necessity any misconception. There could have been none in Hezekiah's thoughts concerning the Maker of heaven and earth.

which hath sent him [R.V. **wherewith he hath sent**] *to reproach the living God*] There is in the orginal a suffix in the singular number attached to the verb, which refers to the 'words' before alluded to though they are mentioned as plural. The idea is however singular, and indicates the 'message'. So that literally the Hebrew would be translated 'which he hath sent it', and that is their way of saying, 'wherewith he hath sent'. The A.V. took the suffix which in the parallel place of Isaiah is not expressed to refer to Rab-shakeh and so translated 'which hath sent him'.

Hezekiah calls Jehovah 'the living God' as opposed to the idols of wood and stone spoken of in Sennacherib's letter.

17. *the kings of Assyria have destroyed* [R.V. **laid waste**] *the nations*] The change is in conformity with the rendering in Isaiah, where the Hebrew, however, says '*all* the countries and their land' (R.V.) The Hebrew word translated 'destroyed' in the next verse is different from this.

18. *have cast their gods into the fire*] A conquering heathen would shew his contempt for the nations which he overcame by destroying the objects of their worship, thus practically telling the vanquished that his gods were superior to theirs. Moreover such destruction would

gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them. Now therefore, O LORD 19
our God, I beseech thee, save *thou* us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou *art* the LORD God, *even* thou only.

Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, 20
Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *That* which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria I have heard. This *is* the word that the LORD hath spoken con- 21
cerning him;

The virgin the daughter of Zion hath despised thee, *and* laughed thee to scorn;

very often be a source of booty, for the images, of wood and stone underneath, were often richly overlaid with gold and silver.

19. *Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee, save* thou *us*] The R.V. puts 'I beseech thee' after 'save thou us' that being the order of the Hebrew sentence. There is no Hebrew in Isaiah for 'I beseech thee'.

that all the kingdoms of the earth may know] It is remarkable how the loftiest souls among the Jews felt that their nation was meant to be God's witness to the rest of the world. Such sentiments are found not seldom in the prophecies and psalms. Cf. also 1 Sam. xviii. 46 and the marginal references there. That case, which is David's conquest of Goliath, may be aptly compared with this. For all men would understand if Sennacherib now were conquered it was not by the power of Jerusalem only, but by the hand of Him who had put His name there, just as David had said 'The battle is the Lord's'.

20—37. THE ANSWER OF THE LORD THROUGH ISAIAH, AND THE MANNER OF ITS FULFILMENT. (2 Chron. xxxii. 21, 22; Isaiah xxxvii. 21—38.)

20. *The Lord God* [R.V. **the God**] *of Israel*] The LXX. represents here 'the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel', a very suitable expression at such a crisis but not in the Hebrew either here or in Isaiah.

That *which* [R.V. **whereas**] *thou hast prayed to me*] This change is in conformity with Isaiah. But in the Hebrew there, the words 'I have heard' are not represented. In the verse before us the R.V. puts 'thee' in italics after them. 'I have heard *thee*'.

21. *The virgin the* [R.V. omits *the*] *daughter of Zion hath despised thee*] The first part of the prophetic word is addressed to Sennacherib. Jerusalem is called 'daughter of Sion' because her inhabitants may be counted poetically as the offspring of Sion. She is also called 'virgin' because hitherto, since David's time, when the chosen people first obtained complete possession of the place, it had never been

The daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.
22 Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed?
And against whom hast thou exalted *thy* voice,
And lift up thine eyes on high?
Even against the Holy One of Israel.
23 By thy messengers thou hast reproached the Lord, and hast said,
With the multitude of my chariots I am come up
To the height of the mountains, *to* the sides of Lebanon,

conquered. And by opening the prophecy with this word it seems to be foretold that it shall still be saved from conquest. Some have preferred to take the three words as all in apposition, rendering 'The virgin-daughter Sion', with much the same sense. In the original the first two words are both in the construct form, but instances are found of such forms standing as if only in apposition.

The daughter of Jerusalem] i.e. The people dwelling in the city.

hath shaken her head at thee] This was a gesture of scorn. Cf. Job xvi. 4, 'I could heap up words against you and *shake mine head* at you'. See also Ps xxii. 7; xliv. 15; cix. 25 and other parallel passages.

22. *and lift* [R.V. **lifted**] *up thine eyes on high*] The name by which Jehovah is often called is 'the Most High.' To utter reproaches and blasphemies against Him betrays a great uplifting of the eyes, a terrible excess of arrogancy.

the Holy One of Israel] This title of God, which occurs very frequently in Isaiah, signifies not only that God Himself is holy and specially gracious unto Israel, but that He makes the people holy also, separate from the rest of the world and sanctified by and for Himself. It expresses both the praise of God, and the privilege of His people.

23. *By thy messengers*] Rab-shakeh and his companions.

With the multitude of my chariots] This is the translation of the marginal reading (*Keri*) which stands as *Kethib* in the corresponding verse of Isaiah. Another reading is represented on the margin of the R.V. thus 'with the driving of my chariots'. This stands in the Hebrew text in Kings, and by some is preferred as being more unusual and therefore perhaps better suited to a poetical passage like the present. But the form in Isaiah has the support of all the versions and so had better be adopted here.

to *the sides* [R.V. **innermost parts**] *of Lebanon*] The word which A.V. translates 'sides' is very frequently applied to the interior, as of a house (Amos vi. 10), or a ship (Jon. i. 5), or a cave (1 Sam. xxiv. 4), or a grave (Is. xiv. 15). And so here it indicates the interior recesses of Lebanon, whither as conqueror Sennacherib expects to penetrate. The Lebanon was one of the choicest parts of the Holy Land, and its beauty is extolled in several passages of Solomon's song (see note on 1 Kings ix. 16).

And will cut down the tall cedar trees thereof, *and* the choice fir trees thereof:
And I will enter *into* the lodgings of his borders, *and into* the forest of his Carmel.
I have digged and drunk strange waters, 24
And with the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged *places*.

and will [R.V. **I will**] *cut down the tall cedar trees* [R.V. **cedars**] *thereof*] Both the changes are to the form in Isaiah. The beauty of the Lebanon was in its glorious trees. The figure chosen therefore expresses the devastation which the Assyrian purposed to bring on the grandest features of the country.

the lodgings of his borders] R.V. **his farthest lodging-places**. The words express the intention of the Assyrian to leave no place in the whole land of Judah unravaged, however remote it might be. There is a various reading in Isaiah, which is rendered 'the height of his border'. The LXX. does not represent this clause.

and into *the forest of his Carmel*] R.V. **the forest of his fruitful field**. R.V. also omits the italics. Carmel though often used as a proper name to designate that beautiful and fertile promontory which stretches out to the Mediterranean on the border of the tribe of Asher, yet as a common noun signifies a fruitful garden-like field. Thus Jer. ii. 7, 'I brought you into a plentiful country' (*lit.* a country of garden-land, Heb. *Carmel*). So here the phrase describes some park-like grounds with all the beauty of fine gardens. 'His wood which is cultivated like a garden'.

24. *I have digged and drunk strange waters*] Probably there is some allusion in this boast which is put into the mouth of Sennacherib to the attempts made by Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4) to deprive the Assyrians of a supply of water. Sennacherib means to say: 'Do what you may I am able by digging wells wherever I go to get water for my host, even where none had been found before'. This is most likely the sense of 'strange', which word does not appear in the corresponding verse of Isaiah.

And with the sole of my feet have I dried] [R.V. **will I dry**] *up all the rivers of besieged* places] R.V. **of Egypt**. This is a boast of the opposite nature. In Judæa the trouble might be that there was too little water. In Egypt there would be too much. But as in the former case the Assyrian could surmount all difficulties, so he had but to march into Egypt, and at his approach the Nile should be dried up and make a way for his troops to pass. The change of tense in the verb is necessary from the Hebrew, and the language is the proud king's way of saying 'As soon as I have reduced Jerusalem, I will pass on to Egypt and win that land too'.

The word translated 'rivers' is the Heb. 'Yeor' and is a proper name of the Nile. See R.V. Gen. xli. 1 margin. It is translated 'Nile' in R.V. of Is. xix. 7, three times over. Also the word rendered 'besieged

25 Hast thou not heard long ago *how* I have done it,
And of ancient times that I have formed it?
Now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste
Fenced cities *into* ruinous heaps.
26 Therefore their inhabitants *were* of small power,
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field, and *as* the green herb,
As the grass on the house tops, and *as* corn blasted before it be grown up.
27 But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in,

places' is the Hebrew 'Mazor' another form for 'Mizraim' the common word for 'Egypt', 'Mazor' is translated 'Egypt' in R.V. both here and in Is. xix. 6, and Micah vii. 12.

25. This verse and the three following contain Jehovah's response to Sennacherib. The boaster is told that in all he has done he has been but God's instrument, and that the events in which he has played that part had been ordained by the divine counsels long before.

Hast thou not heard long ago how *I have done it*] The R.V. puts 'long ago' at the end of this clause. The fame of God's protection and leading of Israel might be expected to have penetrated to other nations. From their history the heathen might have learnt that the people of the world are under the rule of the Lord, and that their destinies are ordered by Him.

And *of ancient times that I have formed it*] R.V. **and formed it of ancient times**. The LXX. represents the two first clauses of this verse merely by ἔπλασα αὐτήν, συνήγαγον αὐτήν.

Now have I brought it to pass] It was ordained long ago, and now I have permitted it to become a fact. With the whole of these four verses may be compared the Lord's address to the Assyrian (Is. x. 9—19). There that nation is described as the 'rod of God's anger'. It is God that sends him and gives him his charge to take spoil and prey. But hereafter the Lord will punish him also, and the glory of his high looks. For another rendering of this sentence see margin of A.V.

26. *Therefore*] i.e. Not, as thou thinkest, because of thy might, but because I sent thee; for this reason it is that the people against whom thou camest were dismayed.

of small power] Literally, as in the margin 'short of hand'. Cf. the question of Moses (Num. xi. 23) 'Is the Lord's hand waxen short?' See also Is. l. 2; lix. 1.

They were as *the grass of the field*] All these figures of frailty are found in other places of Scripture. See Ps. xxvii. 2; xc. 5; cii. 4, 11; Is. xl. 7. The grass upon the housetops, Ps. cxxix. 6.

27. *But I know thy abode*] R.V. **sitting down**. The verse expresses to the full, but with wonderful conciseness, how God has observed and

And thy rage against me.
Because thy rage against me and thy tumult is come up 28
into mine ears,
Therefore I will put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle
in thy lips,
And I will turn thee back by the way by which thou
camest.
And this *shall be* a sign unto thee, 29
Ye shall eat *this* year such things as grow of themselves,
And in the second year that which springeth of the same;
And in the third year sow ye, and reap,
And plant vineyards, and eat the fruits thereof.

is observing every action of Sennacherib. His dwelling, his movements to and fro, and the spirit which actuates them are all open before God's eyes, and He identifies Himself so completely with Hezekiah and Jerusalem as to call the rage of the Assyrian against them rage against Himself.

28. *is come up into mine ears*] So the cry of Sodom is said (Gen. xviii. 21) to *come up* unto God, and grieve Him. See also Jas. v. 4 where the cries of the oppressed labourers are said to be 'entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth'. The R.V. renders the first part of the verse **Because of thy raging against me and for that thine arrogance is come up**, &c.

I will put my hook in thy nose] The Assyrian is but as a wild beast let forth and permitted to do harm, but he is to be caught and reduced to subjection again, now that the time has come to put an end to his work.

by the way by which thou camest] Answering the boast that Sennacherib would go on till he had conquered Egypt.

29. *And this* shall be *a* [R.V. **the**] *sign unto thee*] The next portion of the oracle is addressed to Hezekiah. On the giving of a sign to mark the certainty of a prophecy, cf. Is. vii. 11—14.

Ye shall eat this *year such things as grow of themselves*] R.V. **that which groweth of itself.** The meaning of the sign appears to be this. Sennacherib was to be driven away from Jerusalem, yet though the land had been overrun by the enemy, and the people of Jerusalem had been shut up within the walls, they should find enough produce from what had been shed on the ground in the previous harvest time to serve them for the first year. In the next year they should be supplied in the same way, so that they could rest from the labours of the field, and both they and their lands enjoy a sabbatical year. Then in the third year they should commence undisturbedly their agricultural work, and enjoy their crops in peace. So that the sign looks far beyond the immediate deliverance (as also it does in Is. vii. 14 just quoted) and proclaims to Jerusalem a prolonged period of peace and security.

30 And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah
Shall *yet* again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
31 For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant,
And they that escape out of mount Zion:
The zeal of the LORD *of hosts* shall do this.
32 Therefore thus saith the LORD concerning the king of Assyria,
He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it *with* shield,
Nor cast a bank against it.
33 By the way that he came, *by the same* shall he return,
And shall not come into this city, saith the LORD.
34 For I will defend this city, to save it,
For mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

30. *The remnant...shall* yet *again take root*] Just as in the case of their crops, so shall it be with the people. God shall preserve a remnant, as He was doing in the shed grain of the harvest, and these shall once more grow up, in spite of their present low estate.

31. *And they that escape out of mount Zion*] R.V. **And out of mount Zion they that shall escape.** The change of order, as well as the change of tense, makes the sense more clear, and improves the parallelism.

The zeal of the Lord of hosts *shall do* [R.V. **perform**] *this*] In the Massoretic text there is a space left without consonants for the words in italics, and the vowel-points only are written there. The complete text exists in Isaiah, and ought to be here, but because in the early authoritative copies it did not occur, it has been continually left out. The R.V., which translates the *Kethib*, omits the italics.

32. *Therefore*] The LXX. makes the same error here with regard to the word 'therefore' as was noticed above on i. 3, and renders the Hebrew by οὐχ οὑτῶς. See former note.

He shall not come into [R.V. **unto**] *this city*] The R.V. renders the preposition correctly, and makes the same change in the next verse. We have no mention of Sennacherib's personal approach nearer than Libnah. (See above verse 8.)

Nor [R.V. **neither shall he**] *come*] The change relieves the verse from the monotony of several clauses commencing in exactly the same way.

nor cast a bank [R.V. **mount**] *against it*] 'Mount' is the correct term for an embankment thrown up for the purposes of a siege, and occurs in the A.V. of Jer. vi. 6; xxxii. 24; xxxiii. 4; Ezek. iv. 2; xxi. 22.

33. *By the way that he came*] Cf. above verse 28, and the fulfilment in verse 36.

34. *for mine own sake*] God's mercy and love to Israel were mani-

And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the LORD went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they *were* all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping *in* the house of Nisroch his god, that

35 36 37

fested that in them He might have witness to all the world. Hence the Psalmist often celebrates these qualities, and adds that they were shewn by Jehovah 'for His name's sake'. Cf. Ps. cvi. 8, 'He saved them for *His name's sake*, that He might make His mighty power to be known'. So God speaks (Is. xliii. 25) by the prophet: 'I am He that blotteth out thy transgressions *for mine own sake*'. See also Is. xlviii. 11.

35. *And it came to pass that night*] For this the record in Isaiah has only 'Then'. It would appear from the history that the destruction of his army took place before Sennacherib himself could have reached Jerusalem.

the angel of the Lord went out] R.V. **went forth.** The R.V. assimilates to Isaiah. In 2 Chron. xxxii. 21 the record is, 'The Lord sent an angel which cut off all the mighty men of valour, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land'.

and when they [R.V. **men**] *arose early*] The number of the slain (185,000) was exceeding great, and the Chronicler's statement makes the loss more terrible by saying that among those destroyed were all the leaders of the host.

36. *and dwelt at Nineveh*] Apparently, and very naturally, deterred from any of his grander schemes by the terrible calamity which had befallen him, Sennacherib went to his own capital. How long a time elapsed between this overthrow around Jerusalem and the death of the king, spoken of in the next verse, we have not sufficient data to decide. The canon of Ptolemy fixes the accession of Sennacherib in B.C. 702, his death in B.C. 680. These dates cannot be made to harmonize with the Scripture chronology.

37. in *the house of Nisroch*] The LXX. gives the name as Μεσεράχ. Of Nisroch we have no information except this passage, and it is uncertain whether the name be rightly represented in the Hebrew. Some have connected the word with the Hebrew *nesher*=an eagle, and because on the Assyrian monuments one most conspicuous figure is an eagle-headed man have thought that the name given to the god by the Hebrews refers to this representation. Probably the name is incorrect either because the Jews did not learn it correctly, or connected it with a false etymology. Josephus (*Ant.* x. 1, 5) says Sennacherib was murdered 'in his own temple Arasce' (ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ ναῷ Ἀράσκῃ), which looks as if he had had some different name before him.

Adrammelech and Sharezer *his sons* smote him with the sword: and they escaped *into* the land of Armenia. And Esarhaddon his son reigned in his stead.

20 In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the

Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons] Just as in verse 31 the Massoretic text had an omission of consonants and gave only the vowels of the word, so it is done with 'his sons' here. The consonants as well as vowels are written in the parallel place in Isaiah. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 21) says 'they that came forth of his own bowels slew him with the sword'.

into *the land of Armenia*] R.V. **Ararat.** The change is in accordance with the Hebrew text. But the interpretation of Ararat as Armenia is found in the Vulgate of Gen. viii. 4, where 'upon the mountains of Ararat' is represented by *super montes Armeniæ.* Then in the verse of Isaiah parallel to this of 2 Kings, the LXX. translates by εἰς Ἀρμενίαν, and the Vulgate by *in terram Armeniorum.* That *Ararat*, though unknown to the Greeks and Romans, was the name of a part of Armenia is made evident by the name *Araratia* being given by Moses of Khorene to the central province of that country (*Hist. Armen.* Whiston, p. 361). In Tobit i. 21 where we have a notice of this king Sennacherib and his death, the name of the land of refuge is given as *Ararath.*

Esarhaddon] According to the Assyrian canon this king came to the throne in B.C. 681, and reigned till 668. In consequence of disaffection in Babylonia, he united it to the Assyrian kingdom and was the first (and only) Assyrian who had two capital cities. For he resided now in Nineveh and now in Babylon. On his dwelling at Babylon, cf. 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. Esarhaddon was famous for the number and grandeur of his buildings, having erected in Mesopotamia and Assyria no fewer than thirty temples. His palace at Nimrûd has been discovered and excavated in recent times.

CH. XX. 1—11. SICKNESS OF KING HEZEKIAH. HIS LIFE IS PROLONGED IN ANSWER TO HIS PRAYER. THE SIGN GIVEN BY GOD THAT THIS SHOULD BE SO. (2 Chron. xxxii. 24; Isaiah xxxviii. 1—22.)

1. *In those days was Hezekiah sick*] Scripture writers are not precise in specifying times, and 'in those days' may mean no more than 'about that time' either before or after the defeat of the Assyrians. But there are one or two marks which may help us to come to a conclusion. In verse 6 the promise is made 'I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria'. But these words seem to relate rather to a further continued preservation than to the overthrow which drove Sennacherib away. Though the Assyrians were gone, it was not unlikely that they would return. It is to deliverance from all such future attacks that God's promise is best referred. For the visit of the ambassadors of the king of Babylon was 'at that time'

prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to 2 the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, 3 O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in

(verse 12), clearly when Hezekiah had recovered, and when time enough had elapsed for the news about the sickness and the recovery to have reached Babylon. But the embassy was not merely for the purposes of congratulation, but to secure Hezekiah's alliance with Babylon against Assyria. The time would seem to the Babylonians most opportune for shaking off the Assyrian yoke, and the help of that power in attacking which the Assyrians had suffered so much loss, would appear the very best help that could be sought. Hence Berodach-baladan availed himself of the excuse of congratulating Hezekiah on his recovery to send an embassy to sound the king of Judah on the subject of an alliance. Hezekiah's answer was given by the exhibition of his supplies and stores of armour. Connecting the events together thus, we come to the conclusion that Hezekiah's sickness occurred soon after the Assyrian overthrow, and that thus the notes of time which fix (xviii. 13) Sennacherib's invasion in the *fourteenth* year of Hezekiah's reign, and promise the king *fifteen* years more of life are substantially exact, and fill up together the *twenty-nine* years assigned to Hezekiah's reign in xviii. 2.

And the prophet Isaiah [R.V. **Isaiah the prophet**] *the son of Amoz*] The change of order conforms to Isaiah xxxviii. 1.

Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live] One can hardly read these words without the conviction that the conduct of Hezekiah, after his deliverance from the Assyrian siege, had not been such as to find favour with God. A message of this kind would not be sent from God without good cause. Either there had been a lack of thankfulness, or the king was too much elated with the glory of so miraculous a deliverance. That Hezekiah could think of his own greatness and forget to point to God as its author is seen as we read of the display he made before the Babylonian embassy, which is recorded in this chapter.

2. *Then he turned his face to the wall*] He was in deep sorrow, and would pray without being observed. Ahab did the like, but it was in childish petulance (1 Kings xxi. 4). If Manasseh was the eldest son of Hezekiah, the king was at this time childless, for Manasseh was but twelve years old at his father's death. Hence not only his own life, but the succession of the house of David appeared likely to come to an end.

3. *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now*] R.V. **Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee.** The R.V. adopts the order of the words in Isaiah.

It was only at a moment of great elation and prosperity that Hezekiah forgat God. The testimony which he himself bears to his own character

truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that* which *is*
4 good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came
to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out *into* the middle court,
5 that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again,
and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the
LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer,
I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third
6 day thou shalt go up *unto* the house of the LORD. And I

appears to be generally true. He must have lived as a God-fearing son under an idolatrous father. When he came to the throne, while he had the work of purifying God's worship in hand, and the Philistines were not driven out of Judah, he did all things well. But after some prosperous years he had himself to own to Sennacherib 'I have offended'. During the war with Assyria he set a noble example. When the pressure was removed he gave way for a short time to pride and a boastful spirit. Moreover his care for his son's training, if we may judge by Manasseh's life when he became king, can hardly have been so zealous as we might expect from a father whose youth had been passed amid the difficulties of an idolatrous court. Altogether Hezekiah is one of those characters which shine brightest in adversity.

4. into *the middle court*] R.V. **middle part of the city**. The variation is due to a difference of reading, the R.V. translating, as is nearly always the case, the *Kethib*. The LXX. and most of the versions render the *Keri*, which the A.V. follows. The *Kethib* has העיר, the *Keri* substitutes חצר, which latter is the word for the 'court' of the palace in the description of Solomon's buildings (1 Kings vii. 8). But the city of Jerusalem was built on two hills, the western of which was more than a hundred feet higher than the eastern. The expression in the text would apply exactly to the portion lying between these two, and there seems to be no reason for accepting the *Keri*. It probably has sprung from a desire to represent God as hearing prayer so readily that a favourable answer was given before the prophet was beyond the precincts of the palace.

A description of the city will be found in Josephus, *B. J.* v. 4, 1, *seqq.* where the three parts of Jerusalem are noticed, the upper city (ἡ ἄνω πόλις) being Zion, the lower (ἡ κάτω πόλις) Akra. Isaiah had, according to the *Kethib*, gone into the portion between these two.

5. *tell* [R.V. **say to**] *Hezekiah the captain* [R.V. **prince**] *of my people*] The first of these changes is in conformity with Isaiah. The latter clause 'the captain &c.' is not in the parallel place in Isaiah, where, in this portion of the narrative, the whole record is much briefer.

The name 'prince' (Heb. *nagid*) is that which was applied by Jehovah Himself to the first elected king of Israel (1 Sam. ix. 16), Saul.

behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto *the house of the Lord*] These words are not found in Isaiah. But there

will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And 7 they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered. And 8 Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, What *shall be* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and *that* I shall go up *into* the house of

is given there the thanksgiving of Hezekiah which expresses the feelings with which the king would go up to the temple to acknowledge the goodness which had spared his life. It is called 'the writing of Hezekiah when he had been sick and was recovered of his sickness' (Is. xxxviii. 9), and is a sort of psalm of thanksgiving.

Though the promise of God 'thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord' is omitted in Isaiah we yet see from the concluding words of Is. xxxviii. that the thought of it was in the writer's mind, for he tells us 'Hezekiah had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?'

6. *fifteen years*] See above on verse 1.

I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria] Some stress has been laid on these words as though they necessarily implied that Jerusalem was still besieged. The preposition rendered 'out of' is literally 'from', and if that be borne in mind there is no reason why the words should not refer to the continued protection which Hezekiah and his city enjoyed afterwards when Sennacherib had been driven away.

for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake] These words, which occur before in xix. 34, are not found in Isaiah xxxviii.

7. *Take a lump* [R.V. cake] *of figs*] Except here and in Isaiah xxxviii. 'cake' is the constant rendering of A.V. for this word. See 1 Sam. xxv. 18; xxx. 12; 1 Chron. xii. 40. The figs were closely pressed together for better keeping when they were dried, just as we find is done at the present time.

The virtue of figs made into a plaster has long been celebrated. Gerarde in his Herball (p. 1328) says, 'Figs stamped and made into the form of a plaister...soften and ripen impostumes...all hot and angry swellings, and tumours behind the eares'. The *boil* from which Hezekiah was suffering was clearly something of this character, and confined to one spot, so that it could be treated by a poultice. It was therefore most likely some sort of carbuncle, which in certain parts of the body, as the back of the neck, can prove fatal. The conjectures some of which make the disease to be *pleurisy*, others the *plague*, contracted from the Assyrians, others, *elephantiasis* or *leprosy*, are not so probable, as none of them appear likely to have been treated by a plaster.

8. *What* shall be *the sign*] The king would have some token at once that the promise made to him should come to pass, and though the time was but very brief to wait, yet his request is granted. In Is. vii. 11 there was a sign *offered* by God to Hezekiah's father.

9 the LORD the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt
thou have of the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing
that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten
10 degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered,
It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees:
11 nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And
Isaiah the prophet cried unto the LORD: and he brought
the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone
down in the dial of Ahaz.

9. *shall the shadow go forward ten degrees* [R.V. **steps**], *or go back ten degrees*] R.V. **steps**. In the Hebrew there is no sign of interrogation in the first clause. But instances are not rare in which the interrogative sign is left out (cf. 1 Sam. xvi. 4; 2 Sam. xviii. 29). A greater difficulty is in the tense of the first verb. The clause, if it stood alone, would be translated, 'The shadow hath gone forward ten steps, (what) if it shall go back ten steps? But Hezekiah's answer implies that an alternative question was asked. Thus both A.V. and R.V. have translated it, but how the grammar is to be made to yield a double question is not easy to see. For if the omitted interrogation be supplied, we have still only, 'Hath the shadow gone forward ten steps?'

10. *It is a light thing for the shadow to go down* [R.V. **decline**] *ten degrees*] R.V. **steps**. The verb is not the same as that translated 'to go down' in verse 11. The king's meaning is that it appears more natural and therefore easier, for the shadow to make a sudden advance in the direction in which it has been already going, than to turn in the contrary way.

let the shadow return backward ten degrees] R.V. **steps**. Thus reversing the order of nature.

11. *And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord*] This verse and the two preceding are much compressed in the narrative of Isaiah, and nothing is said of Isaiah's supplication, nor of the alternatives offered to the king. The whole is put into the form of a direct message from God, 'Behold I will bring again' &c.

he brought the shadow ten degrees [R.V. **steps**] *backward*] The statement in Isaiah is not made concerning the shadow, but the sun. 'So the sun returned ten degrees' (R.V. **steps**).

in [R.V. **on**] *the dial of Ahaz*] As will be seen from the margin of R.V., the word here rendered 'dial' is the same which in the previous verses the Revisers have translated 'steps'. Also wherever the word is used elsewhere, and it is not of rare occurrence, it always refers to steps or stairs. It seems therefore best to consider that the contrivance by which the time of day was marked in this case was something which could be called a 'staircase' or 'steps'. We must think too of the sign as given to Hezekiah while he lay upon what had been till a short space before, the bed of sickness and expected death. We must therefore conclude that the contrivance, whatever it was, must have been one

which the king could see from his chamber. Probably it would be in the court of the palace, and there it might take the form of a staircase-like erection, with a gnomon or projecting shaft, so contrived that the shadow thrown by it should fall along the steps and grow shorter or longer as the sun rose or fell in the heavens. Or it might be a staircase proper, erected on one side of the court, and a staff or pole might be so fixed as to cast a shadow which by the motion of the sun would descend or rise on the steps. If such a staircase existed on the opposite side of the court to the king's chamber (and such external staircases were very common) the means by which the sign should be given were ready to hand. Several kinds of sundials have been suggested which would fulfil the conditions, and Ahaz from his connexion with the Assyrians may have become acquainted with them, for they were first invented by the Babylonians. But to none of these instruments could we easily apply the word 'steps' so as to call the contrivance, as the Hebrew does, 'the steps of Ahaz'.

With regard to the length of time which is indicated by the word 'step' we have nothing to guide us. There is no necessity therefore to understand an alteration in the shadow equivalent to ten hours of our day. If it were half or a quarter of that time, it would be a very appreciable change on the dial.

Of the speculations how the miracle was brought to pass none can be expected to be satisfactory. And we should bear with us, on such matters, Zophar's question (Job xi. 7) 'Canst thou by searching find out God?' There have been some who thought that the earth's motion was really reversed, but modern science has shown that by refraction, (of course in this case, taking place out of the ordinary course of nature,) such an alteration in the position of the shadow might be effected. Another opinion put forward is that the sun was eclipsed, in such wise that the upper limb was obscured, which would have the effect of lengthening all shadows, and thus causing the appearance of going backward on the dial of the stairs.

Bishop Hall's remarks are 'whether shall we more wonder at the measure of the love of God to Hezekiah, or at the power of Isaiah's faith in God? Out of both, either the sun goes back in heaven that his shadow may go back on earth; or the shadow no less miraculously goes back on earth, while the sun goes forward in heaven. It is true that the prophet speaks of the shadow, not of the sun; except perhaps because the motion of the sun is best discerned by the shadow, and the motion of the shadow is led by the course of the sun. Besides that, the demonstration of this miracle is reported to be local, in the dial of Ahaz, not universal in the sensible length of the day: withal the retreat of the sun had made a public and noted change in the frame of nature; this particular alteration of the shadow, in places limited, might satisfy no less without a confusive mutation in the face of the world. Whethersoever, to draw the sun back together with the shadow, or to draw the shadow back without the sun, was the proof of the Divine omnipotence, able therefore to draw back the life of Hezekiah fifteen degrees from the night of death to which it was hastening'.

12 At that time Berodach-baladan, the son of Baladan, king
of Babylon, sent letters and a present unto Hezekiah: for
13 he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick. And Hezekiah
hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of
his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices,

12—21. An embassy to Hezekiah from the king of Babylon. Isaiah's message to Hezekiah. Death of Hezekiah. (2 Chron. xxxii. 25—33; Isaiah xxxix. 1—8.)

12. *Berodach-baladan*] The first part of the name is given as Merodach in Isaiah. This is the more correct form, but the interchange of the two labials is very easily made.

This king of Babylon is mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions, as overthrown by Sargon the father of Sennacherib. He is said in the canon to have reigned 12 years, while Polyhistor gives him a brief reign of six months. It seems probable that both are correct. After the defeat by Sargon, at which time he had been king 12 years, he was for some years an exile, but afterwards finding means to recover his kingdom, he kept the power for a very brief space. Whether his embassy to Hezekiah is to be assigned to the longer or the shorter time of his kingship depends upon the date in Hezekiah's life at which his sickness occurred. If, as some have conjectured, that event was before Sennacherib's invasion the embassy must have been before Merodach's expulsion: if Hezekiah's disease followed after Sennacherib's invasion, then the Babylonian embassy must be placed in the brief six months' rule which Merodach had after his return. The date of Merodach's expulsion is placed B.C. 709, his return to the throne B.C. 702.

and a present] This is in the original, *minchah*, a present intended to procure alliance and aid.

for he had heard that Hezekiah had been sick] And probably had heard also of the wondrous sign which attended on his recovery. Whether the announcement of such a marvel would create special interest in Babylon the land of star-worship and star-study we can only conjecture. No doubt the congratulation on Hezekiah's recovery was only used as a pretext for an embassy which should gain over Judah, if possible, to the side of Babylon.

13. *And Hezekiah hearkened unto them*] In Isaiah we read he 'was glad of them', and there is no doubt that is the correct reading. The LXX. gives ἐχάρη, he rejoiced, in this passage. The difference in the Hebrew words is very slight. Here we have וישמע, in Isaiah וישמח.

and shewed them all the house of his precious things] On the margin both A.V. and R.V. give 'spicery' instead of 'precious things'; and the word (with a very slight difference of form) is used in that sense in Gen. xxxvii. 25; xliii. 11. But here as the house seems to have contained the various things which follow after, silver and gold as well as spices, perhaps the more general rendering is to be preferred. The storehouse which at first had its name from the aromatic treasures

and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country, *even* from Babylon. And he said, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All *the things* that *are* in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them. And Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the LORD. Behold, the days come, that all that *is* in thine house, and *that* which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day, shall be carried unto Babylon:

bestowed there, came in time to be used, without change of name, for the keeping of other things that were valuable.

precious ointment] R.V. **oil**. This is the more usual rendering. The stores would be of pure oil more likely than of manufactured ointment.

and all the house of his armour] R.V. omits 'all', which is not in the Hebrew text here, though it is in Isaiah. Hence the Massoretes have put it as a various reading on the margin of this verse.

The house of armour was no doubt 'the house of the forest of Lebanon', which Solomon built as an armoury, see notes on 1 Kings vii. 2; x. 17.

nothing...that Hezekiah shewed them not] He was clearly desirous to produce an impression of his wealth and consequent power. This proud spirit the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxii. 25) describes thus, 'Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him: for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem'.

14. *What said these men?*] Hezekiah does not answer this question. To tell of the proposals which had been made to him by the Babylonians, and of the remarks which had been called forth in praise of all that he had shewn them, would have provoked some reproach from God's prophet, who was probably averse to any alliance with foreign and idolatrous powers, knowing that in Jehovah there was present help so long as His people trusted in Him only.

even *from Babylon*] Except as one of the places whence colonists were brought to occupy Samaria (xvii. 24), Babylon has not before come into Jewish history. Soon it begins to figure largely, especially in the writings of the prophets, and at last becomes the victor of Jerusalem, and the scene of the long captivity of the two tribes.

15. *All* the things *that* are *in mine house*] R.V. **all that is in mine house**. The rendering of the same Hebrew in Isaiah. It has also the advantage of getting rid of the italics.

18 nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that
shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take
away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king
19 of Babylon. Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good *is* the
word of the LORD which thou hast spoken. And he said,
20 *Is it* not *good*, if peace and truth be in my days? And the
rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might, and how he

17. *nothing shall be left*] Though some few Jews remained behind among the ruins of the desolated city, nothing worth taking as booty was left behind. For a description of the overthrow and the plunder, see below xxv. 9—17.

18. *thy sons...shall they take* away] This came to pass in the case of Manasseh, Hezekiah's own son (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11), who was carried as a prisoner to Babylon. That was, however, but the beginning of the sorrows to which this prophecy of Isaiah looked forward.

in the palace of the king of Babylon] Examples of Jews chosen for menial duties in the palace of Nebuchadnezzar at Babylon are found in Dan. i. 6.

19. *Good* is *the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken*] Bp Hall takes these words of Hezekiah as uttered in a proper spirit. 'The rod was smart, yet good Hezekiah kisses it. His heart struck him no less than the mouth of the prophet, meekly therefore doth he yield to this divine correction...God's children are neither waspish nor sullen, when they are chid or beaten: but patiently hold their backs to the stripes of a displeased mercy: knowing how much more God is to be magnified for what He might have done than repined at for what He hath done'.

Some however have thought that the sentiment of the next sentence is too full of selfishness to accord with such a perfect character. The Chronicler however (2 Chron. xxxii. 26) speaks of the king's humbling himself for his pride of heart.

Is it *not* good [R.V. **so**], *if peace and truth be* [R.V. **shall be**] *in my days?*] These words are spoken, as it seems, after reflection on the previous utterance, and seem to breathe a spirit of thankfulness mainly for the peace and security promised for Hezekiah's own lifetime. That this would be granted is implied because the prophecy speaks only of the evils which should come upon his descendants.

20. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *the rest of the acts of Hezekiah*] The Chronicler enlarges somewhat on Hezekiah's prosperity, 'The Lord guided [the king and his people] on every side. And many brought gifts unto the Lord to Jerusalem, and presents to Hezekiah, so that he was magnified in the sight of all nations from thenceforth'. This may account for the abundance of treasure which was ready to be shewn to the Babylonian embassy.

all his might] He seems among other things to have had much cattle, which was one of the chief forms of wealth in those days. He had (2 Chron. xxxii. 28, 29) 'stalls for all manner of beasts, and cotes

made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And Hezekiah slept with his fathers: and 21
Manasseh his son reigned in his stead.

Manasseh *was* twelve years old when he *began* to reign, 21
and reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his

for flocks. Moreover he provided him cities, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance: for God had given him substance very much'.

he made a [R.V. the] *pool, and a* [R.V. the] *conduit*] What Hezekiah did is more definitely described by the Chronicler. 'He stopped', it is said, 'the upper water course of Gihon'. By this is most likely meant what the king did before the invasion of Sennacherib. In some way, by covering over, or diverting, he conveyed the waters of this spring into the city, and made a pool or reservoir to hold a supply for the city at a much lower level, in the valley between the two hills on which Jerusalem was mainly built. This operation the Chronicler describes by 'he brought it (the water) straight down to the west side of the city of David'. This would be done by an underground passage.

in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah] The sources of Hezekiah's history are called in 2 Chronicles 'the vision of Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz, *and* the book of the kings of Judah and Israel'. How far these are identical with what is meant by the verse before us is not clear. But from the history which is produced in the prophecy of Isaiah, we feel sure that there cannot have been much difference in the sources whence the accounts were derived, though the Chronicler has dwelt much more fully on the religious reforms of the king, than suited the plan of the compiler of Kings.

21. *Hezekiah slept with his fathers*] The Chronicler adds 'and they buried him in the chiefest (R.V. the ascent) of the sepulchres of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death'. The change of rendering in the R.V. is necessary and shews us that it was not in the tombs of the kings that Hezekiah was buried, but in some place of an elevated character near thereto. From this time the kings of Judah are no longer laid in the tombs of the kings.

CHAP. XXI. **1—9.** ACCESSION OF MANASSEH KING OF JUDAH. HIS EXCESSIVE IDOLATRIES. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 1—9.)

1. *Manasseh* was *twelve years old*] 'At last, some three years after his recovery, Hezekiah hath a son: but such a one, as, if he could have foreseen, orbity had been a blessing' (Bp Hall).

fifty and five years] A reign longer than his father's whole life, in spite of the addition of fifteen years; and longer than the reign of any other king of Judah or Israel.

2 mother's name *was* Hephzi-bah. And he did *that* which
was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of
the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of
3 Israel. For he built *up* again the high places which Heze-
kiah his father had destroyed; and he reared up altars for
Baal, and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel; and
4 worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. And
he built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD
5 said, In Jerusalem will I put my name. And he built altars
for all the host of heaven in the two courts of the house of

Hephzi-bah] The mother's name is not mentioned in Chronicles, it is the name which Isaiah in his prophecy (lxii. 4) gives to the restored Zion, 'my delight is in her'.

2. *after the abominations of the heathen*] He followed all the idolatrous practices of the nations of Canaan, but as is said below, in verse 11, it was greater sin in him than in them, because he sinned in spite of knowledge.

3. *For he built* up *again the high places*] The R.V. omits 'up'. On Hezekiah's destruction of the high places, see 2 Chron. xxx. 14; xxxi. 1.

and he reared up altars for Baal] The Chronicler says for 'the Baalim', by which is most likely intended the various aspects or attributes under which Baal was worshipped. The LXX. uses the feminine article and says the altars were reared τῇ Βάαλ; which is due to the use of the word בשת *bosheth* = shame, which is feminine, to avoid the abominated name בעל *Baal*. The desire to avoid this word is seen in proper names, among which *Ishbosheth* is put for *Eshbaal*, the name of a son of Saul (1 Chron. viii. 33; ix. 39), also *Mephibosheth* is used instead of *Meribbaal* (cf. 2 Sam. ix. 6 with 1 Chron. viii. 34) and *Jerubbesheth* for *Jerubbaal* (cf. Jud. vi. 32 with 2 Sam. xi. 21).

and made a grove] R.V. **an Asherah**. The Chronicler here too uses the plural 'Asheroth' (A. V. groves). On Asherah, which was probably a wooden image of a goddess so called, see note on 1 Kings xiv. 15 and 2 Kings xiii. 6.

Ahab king of Israel] Who first, at the instigation of Jezebel his wife, introduced the worship of Baal and Asherah into Israel from Phœnicia.

worshipped all the host of heaven] See note on xvii. 16.

4. *he built altars in the house of the Lord, of which*] R.V. **whereof** &c. It seems most likely that the following verse explains what is meant by this. The altars were in the courts of the temple, not within the temple building. Azariah had intruded himself within the holy place (2 Chron. xxvi. 16). Even for his most solemn prayer Hezekiah prayed toward the sanctuary. Intrusion within the walls would have been specially noted.

5. *the two courts of the house of the Lord*] On the two courts of the temple, spoken of respectively as 'the inner' or 'higher' court, or 'the

the LORD. And he made his son pass through the fire, 6
and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with

court of the priests, and 'the great court' which must have enclosed the inner, see note on 1 Kings vi. 36.

6. *And he made his son*] The LXX. represents 'sons' here, and the Chronicler has the plural in the parallel passage, 'He caused his *children* to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom'. Probably the expression in Chronicles only means that he practised this Moloch-worship, and the plural number need not be literally pressed.

pass through the fire] See note on xvi. 3. 'The valley of the son of Hinnom' mentioned by the Chronicler was a ravine on the south and west of Jerusalem, the south-east extremity of which had the name of *Tophet*. Because of the horrors which had been perpetrated there, the place was defiled, and converted into a receptacle of all that was foul and offensive, for the destruction of which constant fires were kept burning. For this reason the name *Ge Hinnom*, modified into *Gehenna*, came to be employed to designate the region of eternal torment.

and observed times] R.V. **practised augury.** The rendering of A.V. is from the Vulgate, but that version in other places represents the sense as being 'to use augury'. (See Vulg. of Isaiah ii. 6; lvii. 3.) In the LXX. the renderings express the gathering of omens, either from sounds heard or from the flight of birds. The Jewish interpreters say it means one who decides by certain signs what days are good for trade, and which to travel on, &c. This is the idea in observing times, but the R.V. appears to embrace the whole of the senses given to the word.

used enchantments] The word is that which is used Num. xxiv. 1 of Balaam going 'to seek for enchantments'. It refers to gathering of signs as the superstitious are wont to do, from this or that, whether they are to do or leave undone any undertaking they contemplate.

dealt with [R.V. **with them that had**] *familiar spirits*] The Hebrew word *Ob*, usually translated 'one that hath a familiar spirit', means originally 'a bottle'. It is applied first of all to the spirit supposed to reside within the persons so possessed; then to the person himself. After that because the answers were supposed to be derived from the spirits of the dead, it was applied to one called up from the dead. So 1 Sam. xxviii. 8 Saul asks at Endor 'Divine unto me by *the familiar spirit*'. The second use of the word is exemplified in the verse before us, where those that deal with the spirit are called *Ob*, and the third sense is found in Isaiah xxix. 4 where the voice of an *Ob* is said to come out of the ground and to whisper out of the dust. The LXX. renders the word by *ἐγγαστρίμυθος*, ventriloquist, probably because the utterances of ventriloquists seem to come from within the speaker without motion of the lips.

The verb rendered 'deal with' is literally 'made'. Hence it has been thought that Manasseh gave offices to such persons as are here spoken of, and appointed (see R.V. marg.) them as official diviners.

familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness
7 in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *him* to anger. And he
set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the
house, of which the LORD said to David, and to Solomon
his son, In this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have
chosen out of all tribes of Israel, will I put my name for
8 ever: neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more
out of the land which I gave their fathers; only if they will
observe to do according to all that I have commanded them,
and according to all the law that my servant Moses com-
9 manded them. But they hearkened not: and Manasseh
seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom
the LORD destroyed before the children of Israel.
10 And the LORD spake by his servants the prophets, saying,
11 Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abomina-
tions, *and* hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites

wizards] The Hebrew word is connected with the verb 'to know'. Hence *wizard*, which implies one who is supposed to be preternaturally *wise* well represents the word.

7. *A graven image of the grove*] R.V. **the graven image of Asherah.** Though usually of wood, such images were also made of silver and carved in stone. The image in question here would be specially grand in view of the position it was to occupy.

the Lord said to David] For the words to David cf. 2 Sam. vii. 13; and to Solomon 1 Kings viii. 20.

8. *neither will I make* [R.V. **cause**] *the feet of Israel move*] R.V. **to wander.** The verb has the notion of a restless unsettled state. It is used (Gen. iv. 12, 14) of Cain as a 'vagabond'.

only if] R.V. **if only.** At the end of this clause there are not two sets of commands spoken of. 'That which I have commanded them' is only explained by 'the law that my servant Moses commanded them'.

9. *Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than &c.*] R.V. **to do that which is evil more than,** &c. The R.V. represents the Hebrew more closely. The phrase in Chronicles is 'to err *and* to do worse than the heathen'. For Judah sinned against light and knowledge.

10—15. GOD'S MESSAGE OF PUNISHMENT. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 10.)

10. *the Lord spake*] The Chronicler says God's warnings were sent both to the king and to his people but they would not hearken.

11. *all that the Amorites*] The Amorites are put for the inhabitants of Canaan generally, though strictly the Amorites, with the Hittites and the Jebusites, were the mountaineer portion of the people, whilst the Canaanites dwelt by the sea and by the Jordan. See Num. xiii. 29.

did, which *were* before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols: therefore thus saith the LORD God of 12
Israel, Behold, I *am* bringing *such* evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Sa- 13
maria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab: and I will wipe Jerusalem as *a man* wipeth a dish, wiping *it*, and turning *it* upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of 14
mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their

12. *therefore*] Here again the LXX. translates the Hebrew word by οὐχ οὑτῶς. See note on i. 3.

I am *bringing* [R.V. **I bring**] such *evil*] The R.V. prints 'such' in ordinary type. For the expression 'the ears shall tingle' cf. 1 Sam. iii. 11; Jer. xix. 3. In both these passages the phrase is used in connexion with utter overthrow, in the one, of Eli's house, in the other, of Jerusalem. The sins there enumerated by Jeremiah afford a parallel to the wickedness of Manasseh's reign.

13. *the line of Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab*] The figures are taken from the occupation of the builder. The builder employs line and plummet that he may carry out his work exactly according to the plan prescribed. But here the pattern is one of utter destruction, which God Himself threatens to carry out after the fashion of Samaria and the house of Ahab, which the previous generation had beheld utterly destroyed. Samaria and the house of Ahab were famous for building (see 1 Kings xxii. 39 note). Hence the peculiar fitness of the figure. These great builders, with all that they had built, were swept away and just so should it be with Jerusalem. The way in which a portion of the judgement was carried out is described by the Chronicler: 'The Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh in chains (R.V.) and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon'.

as a man *wipeth a dish*] The description is of a thing that is done with, and will be used no more. 'To turn it upside down', is literally 'to turn it upon the face thereof', a rendering which brings out very completely the intention of using the dish no more. Such God declares will be His manner of dealing with Jerusalem. The verb rendered 'wipe' is the same which is used Gen. vii. 4, 'Every living substance...*will I destroy*', and in Num. v. 23 'he shall *blot them out*', and in the solemn sentence, Exod. xxxii. 33, 'him will I *blot out* of my book'. The original very markedly shews that God's *wiping* was to be *a wiping out*.

14. *And I will forsake* [R.V. **cast off**] *the remnant*] 'Forsake' need not necessarily imply 'a punishment that has been deserved' which is what is here intended. Hence R.V. has substituted 'cast off' or 'reject' in many instances. Cf. Jud. vi. 13; Jer. xv. 16; xxiii. 33, 39, &c.

enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all
15 their enemies; because they have done *that* which *was* evil
in my sight, and have provoked me to anger, since the day
their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.
16 Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till
he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside
his sin where*with* he made Judah to sin, in doing *that* which
17 *was* evil in the sight of the LORD. Now the rest of the acts
of Manasseh, and all that he did, and his sin that he sinned,
are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the
18 kings of Judah? And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and
was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of
Uzza: and Amon his son reigned in his stead.

15. that *which* was [R.V. is] *evil*] As the words are God's the present is the more appropriate tense.

16—18. OTHER WICKEDNESS OF MANASSEH. HIS DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 18—20.)

16. *Manasseh shed innocent blood very much*] This is alluded to again in xxiv. 4 as the cause of God's continued anger against Judah. It is singular that the Chronicler makes no special mention of this particular offence. Josephus on the contrary (*Ant.* x. 3, 1) says 'He did not even spare the prophets, but even of these he slew some daily (*καθ' ἡμέραν*) so that Jerusalem ran with blood'. The tradition that Isaiah himself was one of the sufferers in this slaughter was current among early Christian legends, and some have taken the mention of 'sawing asunder' (Heb. xi. 37) as an allusion to his fate.

from one end to another] Lit. 'from mouth to mouth'. See note on 2 Kings x. 21.

17. *the rest of the acts of Manasseh*] The compiler of Kings says no word about Manasseh's repentance, which forms a considerable part of his history in Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxiii. 12—19). There we read that in his distress he besought the Lord and the Lord heard him and brought him back out of Babylon. 'Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God'. He also built parts of the walls of Jerusalem, and strengthened the cities of Judah. He took away the strange gods and built up the altar of the Lord. Mention is also made of his prayer, of which we have an apocryphal version preserved, and of the seers which spake unto him. There is quoted also as authority the history of Hozai (R.V.). Why the writer of Kings tells neither of Manasseh's captivity nor of his repentance and return is not easy to understand. Perhaps as these events made no difference in the succession, and as he deals with the political rather than with the religious history of the nation, he preferred to omit any record of either the imprisonment of the king or his release.

18. *in the garden of his own house*] See note on xx. 21 above.

Amon *was* twenty and two years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did. And he walked in all the way that his father walked *in*, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them: and he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD. And the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against king Amon; and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead. Now the rest of the acts of Amon

19—26. AMON KING OF JUDAH. HIS WICKED REIGN AND DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 21—25.)

19. *Jotbah*] This place is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible. It is generally thought to be the same as *Jotbath* or *Jotbathah*, mentioned (Num. xxxiii. 33; Deut. x. 7) as a station of the Israelites in their wanderings. It is called 'a land of torrents of water', so that it would be most likely a sort of oasis in the desert.

20. *as his father Manasseh did*] We can see from the notice of Manasseh in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17 that his repentance did not undo all the evil he had brought into the nation. 'The people did sacrifice still in the high places, *yet* unto the Lord their God only'. And on Amon, his son, the reformation of the father seems to have had no effect. 'An ill guise is easily taken up, it is not so easily left. After a common depravation of religion, it is hard to return unto the first purity: as when a garment is deeply soiled it cannot without many lavers recover the former cleanness' (Bp Hall).

21. *served the idols that his father served*] i.e. Making again the same sort of graven images, which we must suppose Manasseh in his repentance had broken in pieces.

22. *and he forsook the Lord God*] The Chronicler says 'Amon trespassed more and more.'

23. *the servants of Amon conspired against him*] The servants must be the court officers who were close about the king. The place where he was killed, 'his own house', shews this, and the present destruction of Amon's murderers by 'the people of the land' proves that it was no popular movement against the king, but only some private intrigue. The people also shewed their attachment to the house of David by immediately placing Amon's son, Josiah, on the throne.

and slew the king] R.V. **put the king to death.** The change is made to shew that the word is not the same as that translated 'slew' in the next verse.

which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chro-
26 nicles of the kings of Judah? And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza: and Josiah his son reigned in his stead.

22 Josiah *was* eight years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of
2 Boscath. And he did *that* which *was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father,
3 and turned not aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left. And it came to pass in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *that*

26. *in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza*] See above, verse 18. This was evidently a new burial-place contrived for themselves by the kings, in close neighbourhood to the royal palace.

CHAP. XXII. 1—7. JOSIAH KING OF JUDAH. HIS GOOD REIGN. HE BEGINS TO REPAIR THE TEMPLE. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 1—13.)

1. *Josiah* was *eight years old when he* began *to reign*] Called to the throne as such a mere child the new king must have been under some guardianship, and however good his natural desires may have been, he could hardly have commenced the great reforms which he brought about until he had been some time on the throne.

Boscath] R. V. Bozcath. This latter is the form of the word in Josh. xv. 39, where it is mentioned between Lachish and Eglon among the cities of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. It must have been in the lowlands of Judæa, but its site is not identified. It is mentioned only in these two passages of the Bible.

3. *And it came to pass in the eighteenth year*] The Chronicler gives two dates anterior to this for events in the course of Josiah's life. He says (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7 R. V.) 'In the eighth year of his reign while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the Asherim, and the graven images and the molten images. And they brake down the altars of the Baalim in his presence, and the sun-images that were on high above them he hewed down, and the Asherim and the graven images and the molten images he brake in pieces, and made dust of them and strewed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars and purged Judah and Jerusalem. And *so did he* in the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, in their ruins round about. And he brake down the altars and beat the Asherim and the graven images into powder, and hewed down all the sun-images throughout all the land of Israel, and returned to Jerusalem'. It is clear that we have here, a most comprehensive summary of the destruction of

the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, *to* the house of the LORD, saying, Go up 4
to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may sum the silver
which is brought *into* the house of the LORD, which the
keepers of the door have gathered of the people: and let 5

idolatry in the whole of Josiah's reign and not what he began to do in his twelfth year. The Chronicler however having given us the date at which Josiah first manifested his disposition to destroy the idols out of the land, includes in the same sentences all that was done by the king in the after part of his reign. We cannot but think that the chief impulse toward the utter destruction of the idols was given, as the writer of Kings tells us (xxiii. 3) when the king made a covenant to walk after the Lord, according to the words of the book of the Law, and all the people stood to the covenant. Then began the extermination of all remaining traces of idolatry, which the king himself had begun to remove in some degree in his twelfth year.

The LXX. adds to the date given in this verse, *ἐν τῷ μηνὶ τῷ ὀγδόῳ*, 'in the eighth month', but with no warrant from the original.

the king sent Shaphan...the scribe] The event on which all else in Josiah's reformation seems to hinge is the restoration of the temple. There it was that the book of the Law was discovered which stirred both king and people to attempt a thorough reformation. Therefore the writer of Kings passes to that undertaking without pausing over minor matters which preceded it.

Shaphan...the scribe] Shaphan whose father and grandfather are here mentioned, was the father of Ahikam mentioned below (verse 12) and of Gemariah (Jer. xxxvi. 10, 11, 12), and the grandfather of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14; xl. 5, 9, 11, &c.). The office of Scribe in his time was clearly an important one. He is sent by the king to take oversight of the funds for the restoration of the temple, and seems to have ranked with the governor of the city and the recorder. We have no notice of Shaphan's afterlife. He must have been advanced in years at this time, for thirty-five years after this date his grandson Gedaliah was set by the Chaldæans to be governor of the country.

4. *Hilkiah the high priest*] From 1 Chron. vi. 13 it seems that he was the son of Shallum, and judging from Ezra vii. 1 he appears to have been an ancestor of Ezra.

that he may sum the silver] R.V. **money**. With a view to a restoration of the temple, a collection of money like that in the reign of Joash (see above, chap. xii.) had been in progress, and now, acting on the precedent of that previous time, as appears from the great similarity in the language used to describe them both, Josiah sets about the repair of all that had fallen into decay during the seven and fifty years which had passed since the death of Hezekiah.

the keepers of the door have gathered of the people] The keepers of the door were the priests (see xii. 9) who had charge of the treasury into which the offerings of the devout were put. In Chronicles they

them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the LORD: and let them give it to the doers of the work which *is* in the house of the
6 LORD, to repair the breaches of the house, unto carpenters, and builders, and masons, and to buy timber and hewn
7 stone to repair the house. Howbeit there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand, because they dealt faithfully.
8 And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.

are said to be the Levites. It is noted in 2 Chron. that money was not only gathered from Judah and Benjamin, but also from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim, and from all the remnant of Israel.

5. *into the hand of the doers of the work*] R.V. **of the workmen.** Two sets of people are here both called 'doers of the work' (R.V. **workmen**), first, those who have the oversight, whom we should now call perhaps 'contractors' or 'architects': and secondly, the actual artificers, carpenters, &c. The former received the money in gross, and paid it out for wages to the several classes of workmen. So R.V. also translates the close of this verse 'to the workmen which are in the house of the Lord'.

6. *unto* [R.V. adds **the**] *carpenters, and* [R.V. **to the**] *builders, and* [R.V. **to the**] *masons*] All the words are definite in the original.

and to buy [R.V. **for buying**] *timber*] The contractors had to provide both materials and labour from the money which was put at their disposal, and they were apparently persons who could be trusted to make the best possible provision without oversight.

7. *no reckoning made with them*] Compare the almost exactly similar account in xii. 15. There is no doubt that over such labours the hearts of men are enlarged and they work from love of what they are doing, and so can be trusted to lay out all money to the best advantage, and often to supplement with their own what has been put into their hands. From such overseers to ask an account would be an insult. The Chronicler, as if drawing from official reports, preserves the names of these overseers.

8—20. HILKIAH THE HIGH PRIEST FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW. EFFECT OF THE DISCOVERY ON JOSIAH. THE WORDS OF HULDAH THE PROPHETESS. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 14—28.)

8. *I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord*] Much discussion has arisen about the discovery which this verse records. Before entering on the question of what it was which Hilkiah found, it may be well to notice briefly the circumstances of the time. Josiah had succeeded his father at the age of eight, and in the previous fifty-seven years the kingdom had twice over been deluged with all the

And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.
And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the 9

abominations of idolatry. The greater proportion therefore of the inhabitants of Jerusalem would have had little chance of knowing the law and its requirements. The temple had been neglected, perhaps closed, during a large part of these years. If we may judge of what would be needed now by what had been found necessary in Hezekiah's time (2 Chron. xxix. 5—7) the holy place would have become foul with neglect, the doors shut up, the lamps unlit, no incense within, no sacrifices without the building. As for the book of the Law, whatever might have been its contents at this time, rolls containing it would certainly not be numerous. In the possession of the priests they might be expected to be found, but only here and there. The copy made (according to the Law) for the use of the king would most certainly have perished. We must lay aside, in thinking of this time, all our modern conceptions about books and about a number of copies. The priests, in the matter of services and sacrifices in the temple, taught the people by word of mouth what was proper in every part of the ceremonial, and much of the priestly training was traditional, passed on from one generation of priests to another. That an authoritative copy of the Law, whatever it may have comprised, would be supplied for preservation in the temple we certainly might expect, but after nearly sixty years of neglect of the temple and its services we can feel little surprise that neither Hilkiah nor his fellows were aware of its existence, and that Josiah knew concerning it only what had been taught him by the priests. The half-century previous to Josiah's accession had been a period of utter darkness both for people, priests and king.

Hilkiah gave [R.V. **delivered**] *the book to Shaphan*] The same verb is rendered 'deliver' in verses 9 and 10 just following. The scribe Shaphan was the person to whom such a discovered roll would naturally be brought. Neither Hilkiah nor Shaphan are surprised at what has been found. The high priest describes it to Shaphan by a form of words which must have had a definite meaning before he used them. That is, there was known among the priests, and to some degree no doubt among the people, a collection of precepts which was called by the name of 'the book of the Law'. Therefore the *finding* mentioned in this verse was not a discovery of something unknown before, but the rescuing of the temple-copy of the Law from the hiding-place in which it had long lain (perhaps in one of the chambers round about the temple). Hilkiah knows what it is which he has come upon, the scribe with professional instinct begins to peruse it. Neither of them shews any ignorance or any surprise at the sight or perusal.

9. *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king*] The LXX. has for these words 'And he went in unto the king in the house of the Lord', but with no apparent warrant. Shaphan, bearing the book with him (2 Chron. xxxiv. 16), comes and gives a calm account of the business on which he had been sent at first, viz. the enquiry and arrangement about the money which had been gathered. When that part of the

king word again, and said, Thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the over-
10 sight *of* the house of the LORD. And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered
11 me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the
12 book of the law, that he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of

business is despatched, he tells the king concerning the book that has been discovered. On this 'Book of the Law' see Introduction, pp. xlvi.—xlviii.

Thy servants have gathered [R.V. **emptied out**] *the money*] The verb, in most of its forms is used of 'pouring out', and now and then (see A.V. margin) of 'melting' metals. Here what seems to be intended is that Hilkiah and Shaphan had removed the offerings from the chest at the temple, and had found out what sum was in hand for the work of restoration.

them that do the work [R.V. **the workmen**], *that have the oversight*] As above in verse 5. The scribe and the priest pass on the money to the contractors.

10. *Shaphan...shewed* [R.V. **told**] *the king*] The R.V. has taken the rendering in Chronicles where the Hebrew is the same. 'Shewed' is open to a wrong sense.

Hilkiah...hath delivered me a book] Though Shaphan is represented as speaking of *a* book, there can be no question that he knew what the book was. 'The book of the Law' had a well-defined meaning for him. How far the king understood what such a book contained is questionable. The sacrifices and other religious observances in which he had taken part he of course understood. It is manifest that there was in this book something more than he had known before, from his alarm when he heard it read.

And Shaphan read it] i.e. Portions of it. The Hebrew in 2 Chronicles expresses this, and says 'he read *in it*'.

11. *he rent his clothes*] From what is said afterwards in verse 19, we can see that the portions which affected the king were such passages as Deut. xxviii. There in verse 15, it is said, 'If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God...all these *curses* shall come upon thee'. And in verse 45 'all these *curses* shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee till thou be destroyed'. And in verse 37, 'Thou shalt become *an astonishment, a proverb* and *a byword* among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee'.

12. *Ahikam the son of Shaphan*] Ahikam was father of Gedaliah (Jer. xxxix. 14), and continued in an official position in the reign of Jehoiakim (Jer. xxvi. 24). Ahikam must have been a person of ripe years to be sent on such an errand as this to Huldah. Hence Shaphan his father must have been of an advanced age. (See above on verse 3.)

Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, Go 13
ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us. So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and 14
Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went unto Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jeru-

Achbor the son of Michaiah] R.V. **Micaiah.** Perhaps the father of Elnathan, Jer. xxvi. 22; xxxvi. 12. In the parallel place of Chronicles (2 Chron. xxxiv. 20) he is called Abdon the son of Micah.

Asahiah a servant of the king's] R.V. **Asaiah the king's servant.** The name is so spelt in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20. 'Servant' in such phrases signifies some person of influence in close attendance on the king. See on v. 13 above.

13. *our fathers have not hearkened*] The two reigns of Manasseh and Amon had led the whole people away to idolatry. Of the former of these kings it is said (xxii. 11) 'He hath made Judah also to sin with his idols'. For two generations at the least the retrospect of king Josiah was a very dark one.

14. *Huldah the prophetess*] Except Miriam the sister of Moses, who is called 'a prophetess' in Exod. xv. 20, and Deborah (Jud. iv. 4) in the days of the judges, Huldah is the only woman spoken of in the Old Testament as endowed with prophetic gifts. For the term 'prophetess' as used in Is. viii. 3 signifies only 'a prophet's wife'. Of Huldah we know only what is told us in this history. She lived in Jerusalem, and her husband, Shallum, was probably a Levite, as he had charge of what must have been the wardrobe for the vestments of the priests. The narrative here shews in what esteem she was held both by king and people, and her language in her answer has quite the prophetic character. She speaks not her own words but the message of the Lord the God of Israel, and even as Isaiah in the case of Hezekiah, she promises to Josiah, in the Lord's name, that his supplication shall be answered. For 'wife' the LXX. has *μητέρα*, 'the mother', of Shallum, but with no warrant from the Hebrew.

Tikvah...Harhas] These names appear in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22 as *Tikvath* and *Hasrah.*

keeper of the wardrobe] See above on x. 22. There seems no doubt that the robes here alluded to are the robes of the priests, which are called by the same Hebrew word (בְּגָדִים) in Exod. xxviii. 2, 3, 4; xxix. 5 and many subsequent passages of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers.

15 salem in the college;) and they communed with her. And
she said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel,
16 Tell the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the LORD,
Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the
inhabitants thereof, *even* all the words of the book which the
17 king of Judah hath read: because they have forsaken me,
and have burnt incense unto other gods, that they might
provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands;
therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and
18 shall not be quenched. But to the king of Judah which
sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall ye say to him,
Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, *As touching* the words
19 which thou hast heard; because thine heart was tender, and
thou hast humbled thyself before the LORD, when thou

in the college] R.V. **in the second quarter.** The Hebrew word 'Mishneh' here rendered 'college' has always something to do with 'second' or 'double', and in Zeph. i. 10 it clearly refers to a part of the city of Jerusalem, and A.V. there translates it by 'second' (R.V. second quarter). Probably it was some additional suburban portion of the city, which was known by this name.

15. *Tell* [R.V. adds **ye**] *the man that sent you to* [R.V. **unto**] *me*] At first she places king and people all on one level and denounces the woes that shall surely come upon the nation for their sins, on all alike.

16. *all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read*] The Chronicler says, 'all *the curses* that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah'. The curses are such as those contained in Deut. xxviii. already alluded to, and in Lev. xxvi. 14—39.

17. *works*] R.V. **work**] *of their hands*] The Hebrew has the singular.

my wrath shall be kindled against this place and [R.V. adds **it**] *shall not be quenched*] The king in verse 13 used the expression 'wrath of the Lord'. And the same expression is found in Lev. xxvi. 28, (though there both A.V. and R.V. have 'fury'). The language of that book must have been present to the mind of both Josiah and Huldah.

18. *But to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Judah*] A special message is sent to the king, because he had set about a reform as soon as he heard the words of the Law, and had sent to God's prophetess to obtain guidance in the work he felt it his duty to undertake.

19. *thine heart was tender*] The adjective is often used of those that are fainthearted and feeble. Here it has a good sense and means 'easily touched', 'susceptible'.

and thou hast humbled [R.V. **didst humble**] *thyself*] For grace shewn to such humiliation even in a worse case cf. 1 Kings xxi. 29.

heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that *they* should become a desolation and a curse, and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me; I also have heard *thee*, saith the LORD. Behold therefore, I 20
will gather thee unto thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace; and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place. And they brought the king word again.

And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the 23
elders of Judah and of Jerusalem. And the king went up 2
into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great:

I also have heard thee] The sentence implies 'Because thou didst hear me'.

20. *into thy grave in peace*] i. e. None of these evils denounced against the nation shall come to pass in thy days. As far as they are concerned thou shalt die in peace. The promise has no reference to the war with Egypt (xxiii. 29) in which Josiah was slain at Megiddo.

CHAP. XXIII. 1—14. JOSIAH'S COVENANT TO SERVE THE LORD. DESTRUCTION OF IDOLATRY, AND REMOVAL OF IDOLATROUS PRIESTS. (2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7, 29—33.)

1. *And the king sent, and they gathered*] The whole proceeding described in the first three verses of this chapter may be compared with the similar covenant-making in the reign of Joash (xi. 14—17). That was also followed by a destruction of the objects of idolatry.

2. *and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people*] These were the elders spoken of in the previous verse, the representative men of the principal classes from every part of the kingdom. In the parallel place in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30, the 'prophets' are not mentioned in this enumeration, but in their place the 'Levites' appear. This variation is no doubt due to the different state of things which existed when the two books were compiled. In the days of the compiler of Kings, the effect of the schools of the prophets had not died away, and he could understand that men who had belonged to them would in Josiah's time form a considerable class, and be mentioned as such in the original record. When the Chronicler lived things were very different. Prophets, as a class of men trained in religious societies with a view to future work among the people, had ceased to exist, while the Levites had come into considerable prominence. Meaning therefore to represent the influential persons of the time as present at Josiah's solemn gathering, he mentions 'Levites' who in his own time were a distinguished body, omitting 'prophets' as they were no longer found in the same numbers, nor constituted so distinct a class, when this assembly was collected in Josiah's reign.

small and great] i.e. The poor and the rich.

and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the
3 covenant which was found in the house of the LORD. And
the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the
LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his command-
ments and his testimonies and his statutes with all *their*
heart and all *their* soul, to perform the words of this cove-
nant that were written in this book. And all the people
4 stood to the covenant. And the king commanded Hilkiah
the high priest, and the priests of the second order; and
the keepers of the door, to bring forth out of the temple of
the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for
the grove, and for all the host of heaven: and he burnt
them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried
5 the ashes of them *unto* Beth-el. And he put down the ido-

the book of the covenant] The expression is found in Exod. xxiv. 7, and there seems to refer to the contents of the chapters Exod. xx—xxiii. But there is little doubt that, however brief the first form of statutes may have been to which this name was given, it came in time to include the additional laws of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, and that to some such expanded set of laws the name is here applied.

3. *And the king stood by a* [R.V. **the**] *pillar*] See xi. 14 and the notes there.

to walk after the Lord &c.] The words of the covenant are dictated by Deut. xiii. 4.

all their [R.V. **his**] *heart and all* their [R.V. **his**] *soul*] This was the king's own solemn pledge.

to perform [R.V. **confirm**] *the words of this covenant*] 'Confirm' is the rendering of this verb in A.V. in a very similar passage (Deut. xxvii. 26) 'Cursed be he that *confirmeth* not all the words of this law to do them'.

4. *priests of the second order*] i.e. Those who were next in rank to the high priest (cf. Jer. lii. 24).

the keepers of the door] Who would be of the priests or Levites, and so could enter within the holy place.

to bring forth...all the vessels that were made for Baal] We see therefore that the Baal worship had been fully established within the holy place.

and for the grove] **the Asherah.** See note on 1 Kings xiv. 15. The same change is also made in the 6th verse.

in the fields of Kidron] These were where the valley of the Kidron growing wider offered space for such a burning. We can again see that the destruction was in agreement with the commands in Deut. vii. 25; xii. 3.

and carried the ashes of them unto *Beth-el*] That the refuse of all these objects of idolatry might be cast away in the place whence the

latrous priests, whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem; them also that burnt incense unto Baal, to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets, and to all the host of heaven. And he brought 6
out the grove from the house of the LORD, without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burnt it at the brook Kidron, and stampt *it* small to powder, and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people. And 7

first step was taken which had led to idolatry among the people of the Lord.

5. *the idolatrous priests*] The Hebrew has a special name (*Chemarim*) for these priests, and the most generally accepted derivation of the word is from a root meaning 'black', which may have been the colour of the robes used by these priests, though we are never told of black-robed priests in the Old Testament. In Hosea x. 5 the name is applied to the priests of the calves, and we may almost be certain that these were in dress made to look as much like those in the temple at Jerusalem as possible. The only other place where the name is found is Zeph. i. 4 where the words also refer to this false worship in Judah. The Syriac cognate word is used in the N. Test. for the ordinary Jewish priests, so that perhaps some notion of ministerial solemnity, rather than the mere idea of colour, is attached to the name.

whom the kings of Judah had ordained] The use of *Chemarim* in Hosea x. 5 for the priests of the calves might lead to the supposition that the ordination here spoken of was an introduction of calf-worship into Judah. We have however no definite statement that this was ever done. Perhaps as *Chemarim* had become the name of the irregular priests in Israel, who offered to Jehovah but before the calves, the term came into use for all such priests as served at the high places in the way mentioned 2 Chron. xxxiii. 17 'The people did sacrifice still in the high places, yet unto the Lord their God only'.

6. *without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron*] So that nothing of the polluting idol might remain, even in its destruction, within the holy city. On the brook Kidron, and its connexion with the destruction of other idols, see note on 1 Kings xv. 13.

upon the graves of the children of the people] R.V. **of the common people**. The A.V. renders the same words thus in Jer. xxvi. 23. Those who could not afford to have graves cut out of the rocks and made secure by a stone at the entrance, were laid in the ground at some distance from the city. The reason for desiring a grave in the rock was lest the prowling wild beasts, which were not uncommon in the land, might disturb the dead bodies. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxiv. 4) says the dust was strewn 'on the graves of them that had sacrificed' unto the idols. This would imply that a special burying-

he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that *were* by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings
8 for the grove. And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense, from Geba to Beer-sheba, and brake down the high places of the gates that *were in* the entering

place had been made for those who had adopted the idolatries that had been introduced; a thing which is very improbable.

7. *And he brake down*] On like reforms cf. 1 Kings xv. 12; xxii. 46.

by [R.V. in] *the house of the Lord*] The text says that these abominations were *in* the temple. There is no reason why the English should not represent it plainly.

the women wove hangings for the grove] R.V. the Asherah. It seems that at some of the shrines dedicated to the false gods, instead of more permanent erections, tents were put up, and it was for these that the women were employed in weaving curtains. The Hebrew word rendered 'hangings' is the same which is used in other passages for 'houses' of the high places. The Jewish tradition explains it by 'curtains'. Some have thought that the 'tabernacles' alluded to in Amos v. 26 were of this character, tent-like erections which could be moved when not in use. Another allusion to such curtained structures for idolatrous worship is found in Ezek. xvi. 16. 'Of thy garments thou didst take and deckedst thy high places with divers colours'.

8. *all the priests out of the cities of Judah*] These were the priests who had betaken themselves to the various high places throughout the land, and conducted the worship there (2 Chron. xxxiii. 17). These services were offered 'to the Lord their God only'. But such forbidden places Josiah destroyed and defiled their sites so that they should never be restored. The priests were brought to Jerusalem and were hereafter employed on lower duties as Levites.

from Geba to Beer-sheba] That is, throughout all Judah just as 'from Dan to Beersheba' is used (Jud. xx. 1; 1 Sam. iii. 20) for the whole land of Canaan. *Geba* was in the northern border of the tribe of Benjamin. It is probably the same as *Gibeah* which is spoken of in Jud. xx. 31: *Beersheba* was in the extreme south of Judah. We know from Amos viii. 14 that a 'manner' (R.V. way) of idolatrous worship prevailed there.

the high places of the gates] The open spaces kept about the gates of Oriental cities afforded exactly the site which would be chosen for some shrine of the popular worship, especially when the kings, Manasseh and Amon, had given their strong support to idolatry. It would be thought to harmonize with the royal wishes if an altar were erected close to the place where the king's public judgement-seat was wont to be.

in [R.V. at] *the entering in*, &c.] As the English of both A.V. and R.V. stands, 'the gate of Joshua the governor of the city' must be the

in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* on a man's left hand at the gate of the city. Nevertheless 9
the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, but they did eat of the unleavened bread among their brethren. And he defiled Topheth, 10
which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech. And he took away the horses that the 11
kings of Judah had given to the sun, at the entering in of the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-melech

same which is called in the next clause 'the gate of the city'. In that case, as the text speaks of 'high places', we must understand that there was more than one 'high place' in the same neighbourhood. But as they are called 'high places of the *gates*' it has seemed necessary to some to render the words as if a conjunction were omitted, 'The high places of the *gates*, that which was in the entering in of the *gate* of Joshua...and also that which was...at the *gate* of the city'. Thus the two localities would be different. As 'the gate of Joshua' is mentioned nowhere else, we cannot say where it was, or whether a gate so described could also be called 'a gate of the city'. It seems more probable that it was some inner gate, near the governor's official residence.

9. *came not up to the altar of the Lord*] They had been ministers of the high places, which even if they were erected in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, were yet forbidden, and so these priests henceforth executed no sacrificial office at the temple. They had their support from the offerings made there, but were a class apart and would continue so till they were all passed away. The defect in their practice was held to disqualify them, as physical defects disqualified men from becoming priests.

the unleavened bread] Mentioned as representing those gifts which, after being offered, were devoted to the maintenance of the priests.

among their brethren] i.e. This whole class lived a life distinct from the other priests, being deposed and as it were degraded from their higher office.

10. *Topheth*] See note on xxi. 6, and on 'passing through the fire to Molech' see note on xvi. 3.

11. *the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun*] The course of the sun has been in many languages compared to the careering of a chariot drawn through the sky. Hence when men began to adore the heavenly bodies, it was natural to dedicate a triumphal car to the sun-god and to keep splendid horses for use in the procession in his honour. Such had been provided in Judah during the days of Manasseh and Amon, and were still kept close to the entrance of the temple court.

by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain] Nothing more is known of this man. It may be that he was in attendance on the horses of the sun.

the chamberlain, which *was* in the suburbs, and burnt the
12 chariots of the sun with fire. And the altars that *were* on
the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of
Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made
in the two courts of the house of the LORD, did the king
beat down, and brake *them* down from thence, and cast the
13 dust of them into the brook Kidron. And the high places
that *were* before Jerusalem, which *were* on the right hand of
the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel
had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians,
and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for
Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the

which was *in the suburbs* [**precincts**] *and* [R.V. adds **he**] *burnt*] The word, written here *Parvar* is most probably the same as *Parbar* in 1 Chron. xxvi. 18, where the word occurs twice. The most accepted signification is 'an open portico' into which the chambers of the official persons opened. This must have been somewhere outside the temple building, and is fairly represented by 'precincts'.

12. *the altars that* were *on the top* [R.V. **roof**] *of the upper chamber of Ahaz*] This chamber must also have been erected on some of the buildings (perhaps over a gateway), by which the temple was encircled. It was evidently intended for the worship of the host of heaven. Altars on the roof are mentioned in Zeph. i. 5, and there it is expressly said that they were erected for this worship. Cf. also Jer. xix. 13 and xxxii. 29. The worship of the heavenly host was therefore introduced into Judah as early as Ahaz's time.

the altars which Manasseh had made] See above xxi. 4, 5.

did the king beat down [R.V. **break**], *and brake* [R.V. **beat**] them *down from thence*] The former verb is rendered 'break down' in verses 7, 8 and 15, and that being rendered here consistently, the second verb must be translated differently. It will be seen from the margin both of A.V. and R.V. that the latter may also be rendered 'he ran', and this, which is a very well-supported translation, expresses the haste and eagerness manifested to complete the work of destruction.

13. *the mount of corruption*] This name was given to a portion of the Mount of Olives, because of the idolatrous temples which were erected there. It is called in the Vulgate rendering of this verse 'Mons offensionis', and so the hill is spoken of in Christian writings as 'the Mount of Offence'. The word rendered 'corruption' is also often translated 'destruction' (see marg.), and this name is equally applicable, from the ruinous and destructive results which developed out of this introduction of idolatry by Solomon.

Ashtoreth] On *Ashtoreth*, *Chemosh* and *Milcom*, and the temples which Solomon built for them under the influence of his heathen wives, see the notes on 1 Kings xi. 4—8.

king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut 14
down the groves, and filled their places *with* the bones of men.

Moreover the altar that *was* at Beth-el, *and* the high place 15
which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burnt the high place, *and* stampt *it* small to powder, and burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself, he spied 16
the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and

14. *he brake in pieces the images* [R.V. **pillars**], *and cut down the groves*] R.V. **the Asherim.** From such passages as this we may conclude that the images of Asherah were generally of wood.

bones of men] To the mind of a Jew, trained by the Law to consider the touch of a dead body to be defilement (Num. v. 2) a place defiled in this manner could never again be used for any religious purpose, and we may feel sure that the people would not have shaken off this feeling though they had begun to worship idols.

15—20. JOSIAH DESTROYS THE HIGH PLACE AT BETH-EL, AND DEFILES THE ALTAR. HE FINDS THE TOMB OF THE MAN OF GOD WHO HAD FORETOLD ALL THESE THINGS. HE ALSO SLAYS THE PRIESTS AT BETH-EL. (Not in Chronicles.)

the altar that was *at Beth-el*] i.e. which Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, had erected when the ten tribes revolted from Rehoboam (1 Kings xii. 28, 29). Having purged his own kingdom from idolatry he now turns his thoughts to those Israelites who were left in the northern kingdom. The Chronicler, who omits the history of Israel almost entirely, probably omits the striking incident noticed in these verses because it was not connected directly with Judah. He does tell of the collection of money from Manasseh, Ephraim and the remnant of Israel (2 Chron. xxxiv. 8) at this time, but this was for the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem and so came properly within his subject.

both [R.V. **even**] *that altar and the high place*] The 'high place' means here, and often in other passages, 'the house of the high place', which was some sort of chapel near to the spot where the altar stood.

and [R.V. adds **he**] *burnt the high place.....and burnt the grove*] R.V. **Asherah.** As from the cutting down (verse 14), so here from the burning we learn that the Asherim were wooden even if they were overlaid with metal.

16. *Josiah turned himself*] i.e. To view the overthrow and to satisfy himself that all had been thoroughly destroyed. The king was zealous in the work, and personally superintended what he wished to have done.

he spied the sepulchres] Not close by where the altar and the high place had stood, but on some other hill, which was visible from where the king was standing.

took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these
17 words. Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el.
18 And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet
19 that came out of Samaria. And all the houses also of the high places that *were* in the cities of Samaria, which the

burnt them *upon the altar, and polluted* [R.V. **defiled**] *it*] The change is for consistency. We have the verb translated 'defile' in verses 8, 10 and 13.

according to the word of the Lord] For the history here referred to see 1 Kings xiii. 2.

these words] R.V. **things**. This is the translation in the very next verse.

17. *What title* [R.V. **monument**] is *that that* [R.V. **which**] *I see?*] The word is used in Jer. xxxi. 21 for 'way marks' to guide along a road, and in Ezek. xxxix. 15 for a 'sign' to mark a spot where lay some object needing notice. So that 'monument' appears the better rendering, especially as in the reply the people do not speak to Josiah of a 'title' but of a 'sepulchre'.

the sepulchre of the man of God] The prophet of Bethel who had deceived him, brought the carcase of the dead man back to Bethel and buried it (1 Kings xiii. 29—31) in what must at that time have been a general burial-ground, and on which Jeroboam would never have built his altar.

18. *Let him alone*] R.V. **Let him be.** The verb translated 'let alone', in a later clause of the verse is not the same as this. Hence the change in the English.

that came out of Samaria] i.e. The prophet of Bethel, for that place belonged to what was afterwards known as the kingdom of Samaria. The word 'Samaria' is used here in accordance with the language of Josiah's day. Samaria did not exist in Jeroboam's time, the city which ultimately gave name to the district having only been built in the reign of Omri (1 Kings xvi. 24).

19. *high places that* were *in the cities of Samaria*] It would seem from this that when the ten tribes had been carried away the king of Judah exercised some sort of authority over the people in the northern kingdom. But the high places in Samaria were most likely the places in which purely heathen idolatry was practised. They therefore differed from the high places in Judah, and to their priests Josiah was more severe than to the Levitical priests who had conducted the wor-

kings of Israel had made to provoke *the* LORD to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el. And he slew all the priests of 20
the high places that *were* there upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them, and returned *to* Jerusalem.

And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep 21
the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. Surely there was not holden 22

ship of Jehovah on the high places in his own kingdom. The injunction to slay idolaters is found in Deut. xvii. 2—5.

20. *and burnt men's bones upon them*] To the heathen, as well as to the Jew, this would be a pollution that would make the place for ever unfit for worship.

21—30. HE PUTS DOWN SUPERSTITIOUS RITES AND WORSHIP. HE IS SLAIN AT MEGIDDO WHEN HE GOES AGAINST THE KING OF EGYPT. (2 Chron. xxxv. 1—27; xxxvi. 1.)

21. *Keep the passover*] The Chronicler gives elaborate details concerning the way in which this feast was kept to shew that all the arrangements commanded by the Law were most exactly observed. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the Levites had special injunctions given to them about the purification of themselves, and the doing of all things according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses. The king himself gave the victims, lambs and kids, for the passover offering, from his own substance, and the liberality of priests and Levites was also large. The passover was killed, roasted, divided speedily and eaten according to the prescribed rules. The whole aim of the record is to shew that whatever may have been left undone in times past, everything was now brought into harmony with the primitive ordinance. The Chronicler also mentions by name the rulers of the house of God and the chief of the Levites, as though copying from a contemporary record to which others might refer as well as himself.

in the book of this covenant] R. V. **in this book of the covenant.** The king desires that whatever may have come to be the manner of celebration from long usage, and the neglect which had been introduced through the sins of the kings, there should now be a precise observance of everything which the authoritative book, recently brought to light, required. It is clear from such a passage as 2 Kings xvi. 15 that the regular observance of the sacrificial ordinances had fallen into disuse.

22. *Surely there was not holden* [R. V. **kept**] *such a passover*] The same change is also required in the next verse. The king had said '*Keep* the passover'.

This verse cannot be tortured into the meaning which some have put upon it, that the passover had been wholly neglected since the days of the Judges, or as the Chronicler puts it, 'the days of Samuel the prophet',

such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor *in* all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the
23 kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah, *wherein* this passover was holden to the LORD in Jerusalem.
24 Moreover the *workers with* familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations

and through all the reigns of the previous kings of Judah, with the exception of the one recorded passover of Hezekiah. That the passovers are not mentioned comes about because they were a part of the life of the nation, which went on its natural round as a matter of course. That there was a relaxation in portions of the observance we can have no doubt, but that passovers ceased is as little to be accepted as that there was no observance of the great day of atonement because we do not read of it in the books of Samuel or Kings. It is not possible to believe that provision should have been regularly made for placing the ark of the covenant in a separate room, and that Solomon should have made the elaborate arrangements which he did for the Most holy place, and yet that there should have been no regard paid to the one solemn service for which alone the ark and the Holy of Holies were provided. Both the passover and the day of atonement were observed, though there were times when insufficient regard was paid to the required ceremonial. The passover of Josiah however went back to the complete form ordained in this book of the covenant, and in that respect was remarkable above all those which had been held since the days of Joshua and the elders that outlived Joshua, after which days (Judges ii. 10) 'there arose another generation' and the people fell away, and the ceremonial law was but partially observed, and never so strictly through all that period as in this great passover of king Josiah.

23. *in the eighteenth year of king Josiah*, wherein [R.V. **was**] *this passover was holden*] R.V. **this passover kept.** There is no need for the italics of A.V. The writer wishes to say emphatically *when* this strict observance of the passover took place. The writer of the Kings has never mentioned the passover of Hezekiah, but it is noteworthy that the Chronicler, though he has given the account of Hezekiah's feast, yet, equally with the compiler of this book, says that no such passover as Josiah's had been held before since Samuel's days. This shews clearly that his meaning was that no passover-feast had gone so strictly according to the book of the covenant.

24. *Moreover the* workers with [R.V. **them that had**] *familiar spirits, and the wizards*] See note on xxi. 6. Josiah now proceeds to exterminate all the superstitious practices which grow up side by side with idolatry.

and the images] R.V. **the teraphim.** These were a sort of household gods, and some charm or virtue seems to have been ascribed to the possession of them. Hence Rachel stole *the teraphim* (Gen. xxxi. 19) when she was leaving her father's home. Micah made *teraphim* for his house in Mount Ephraim (Judges xvii. 5), and it was

that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found *in* the house of the LORD. And like unto him was 25
there no king before him, that turned to the LORD with all

the teraphim which Michal, Saul's daughter, hid in the bed, to make believe that David was sick, and thus give him time to escape.

that he might perform (R.V. **confirm**) *the words of the law*] The change is as in verse 3. What Josiah desired was not only to carry out on this occasion the prescription of the Law, but so to establish the observance that it should continue and not be lightly modified. There is no mention of the passover held in the nineteenth year and in the succeeding years of Josiah's reign. It would be rash, however, to conclude from such absence of the record, that the same solemnity was not used every succeeding year of the king's reign, almost as rash as to decide that the passover had been unobserved since the time of Samuel.

The ordinances for putting down them that had familiar spirits and other like superstitions are found in Lev. xix. 31; xx. 6, 27.

25. *no king before him*] For before the kingdom was established the religious strictness of the people had greatly degenerated, and even the best rulers never were so solemnly recalled to the legal regulations as Josiah was by the discovery of the temple-copy of the Law. The next verse makes it clear why there was no such good king after Josiah. The evil doings of Manasseh had corrupted the nation past redemption. The reforms of Josiah lasted not nearly so long.

'The evil that men do lives after them:
The good is oft interred with their bones.'

We have now come to the last mention of the book which was found in the temple and of its influence. From the allusions to its contents we can see that it must have contained such threatenings against neglect of the Law as are found in Deuteronomy; such injunctions for the putting down of idolatry and its attendant superstitions as we have now in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, and such ordinances concerning the observance of the passover as are found in Exodus and in Numbers. Without saying therefore that the book was in the form which we now possess (for that probably underwent revision in the days of Ezra and even later), yet there was in it that which represented for that time the same code and regulations as we have now in the books of Moses, from which it is seen that the portions read by Josiah and Shaphan were substantially derived. It is to be supposed that modifications would be here and there introduced into the regulations, both for civil and religious observances, according to the changed circumstances of the people. But these would only be made by persons acting in the spirit of the great lawgiver, and endued with zeal for God's service as he was, and therefore everything thus included would continue to be called, as it continued to be in spirit, the law of Moses.

his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; neither after him arose
26 there *any* like him. Notwithstanding the LORD turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, where*with* his anger was kindled against Judah, because of all the provocations
27 that Manasseh had provoked him withal. And the LORD said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, My name shall
28 be there. Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of
29 the kings of Judah? In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates: and king Josiah went against him; and he slew
30 him at Megiddo, when he had seen him. And his servants

27. *and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen*] R.V. **this city which I have chosen, even Jerusalem.** This rendering preserves the order of the Hebrew. More than this cannot be said in its favour.

29. *Pharaoh-nechoh*] R.V. **necoh.** He is stated to have been the 5th or 6th king of the Saïte XXVIth dynasty. His expedition against the king of Assyria was B.C. 610. He probably came from Egypt by sea and landed on the coast of Palestine. Otherwise Josiah would have chosen some place further south than Megiddo to meet him. From his conduct we may conclude that Josiah at this time was in alliance with, or perhaps tributary to, Assyria. The destination of the Egyptian expedition (according to the Chronicler) was Carchemish on the Euphrates, and he relates the very considerate message which the Egyptian king sent to Josiah, 'What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day but against the house wherewith I have war. For God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that He destroy thee not.'

and king Josiah went against him] In Chronicles we read that Josiah 'disguised himself, that he might fight with the king of Egypt, and hearkened not unto the words of Nechoh from the mouth of God.' The claim to be divinely directed in the expedition is singular in the mouth of an Egyptian king. The language is not, however, of the same kind as that which Rab-shakeh used, when he asserted that the Lord (Jehovah) had sent him (2 Kings xviii. 25). There may have been such a faith in a single Divine Being among the Egyptians that Nechoh could employ the word God (Elohim) in speaking thereof. Whatever the king's belief, and in spite of the overthrow of Josiah, the Egyptian expedition against Assyria was unsuccessful in the end.

at Megiddo] On this city, and its position and military importance,

carried him *in a chariot* dead from Megiddo, and brought him *to* Jerusalem, and buried him in his own sepulchre. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead.

Jehoahaz *was* twenty and three years old when he *began* to reign; and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. And 31
his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah

see notes on ix. 28. In 2 Chronicles it is said, 'the archers shot at king Josiah, and the king said to his servants, Have me away, for I am sore wounded'.

30. *carried him* in a chariot] The italics are wrong as also in ix. 28. The verb signifies 'to carry in a chariot'. The R.V. prints in common type. According to the Chronicler, they moved him from his war chariot into a second chariot which he had at hand. From Zech. xii. 11 'As the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddo' it has been supposed that Josiah did not die till he reached Hadad-Rimmon, and that the mourning there mentioned by the prophet was for this good king's death. The Chronicler dwells at length on the sorrow which this event caused. 'Jeremiah lamented for him, and all the singing men and singing women spake of Josiah in their lamentations unto this day'. Some have thought that the lamentation here spoken of is preserved to us in the poem contained in Lam. iv. But there is hardly anything in it which can be taken as clear allusion to this time. Jeremiah's dirge for Josiah has probably perished with much other literature of the period.

Jehoahaz...and anointed him] To anoint a king who succeeded in the ordinary way was not usual. Hence some have thought that the people of the land were not acting according to what Josiah himself would have wished, nor choosing the recognised successor in passing over the elder brother. They wished therefore, by this solemn rite, to ensure his acceptance as their religiously consecrated monarch.

It appears from the history in Kings that Eliakim (Jehoiakim) was older than Jehoahaz, because on Eliakim's succession he is stated to have been 25 years old, while Jehoahaz, whose reign was only of three months' duration, is said to have been 23 when he came to the throne (2 Kings xxiii. 31 and 36). But in the genealogy (1 Chron. iii. 15) the sons of Josiah are put down as 'the firstborn Johanan (and this the margin of A.V. identifies with Jehoahaz), the second Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, the fourth Shallum'. If the margin of A.V. is correct then Jehoahaz would have succeeded in his proper place. But he is called Shallum in Jer. xxii. 11, and so he would be, according to the Chronicler, the fourth son.

31—35. REIGN OF JEHOAHAZ. HE IS PUT DOWN BY THE KING OF EGYPT. JEHOIAKIM IS MADE KING, AND BECOMES TRIBUTARY TO EGYPT. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 1—4.)

31. *his mother's name* was *Hamutal*] So he was by the same

32 of Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight
of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.
33 And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the
land of Hamath, that *he* might not reign in Jerusalem; and
put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver, and
34 a talent of gold. And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the
son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, and
turned his name *to* Jehoiakim, and took Jehoahaz *away:*
35 and he came *to* Egypt, and died there. And Jehoiakim
gave the silver and the gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the
land to give the money according to the commandment of
Pharaoh: he exacted the silver and the gold of the people
of the land, of every one according to his taxation, to give
it unto Pharaoh-nechoh.

mother as well as by the same father as Zedekiah. See xxiv. 18. On *Libnah*, see above viii. 22.

33. *put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath*] In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 3 it is said 'the king of Egypt put Jehoahaz down at Jerusalem'. We cannot, however, be sure that this implies an advance by Pharaoh-nechoh upon the holy city. However, the appointment which the people had made was clearly not acceptable to the Egyptian king, and Jehoahaz was carried away to the point which Pharaoh had reached in his march from Carchemish, and there put in bonds.

Riblah] (called also *Riblathah*) was a city on the Orontes, and on the road which led from Palestine to Babylon. It is afterwards mentioned as the place at which Nebuchadnezzar tarried during the reduction of Jerusalem (xxv. 20, 21) and whither the captives were brought to him.

tribute of an hundred talents] On the value of these sums, see above on v. 5.

34. *Eliakim...and turned his name* to *Jehoiakim*] We can hardly think that this change was made by Pharaoh. He probably insisted on a change of name, but allowed the new king to suggest what it should be. So the change was made from *El* (God) *iakim* (will establish), to *Jeho* (i.e. Jehovah) will establish. On the custom of changing the names of subject persons and slaves, cf. the change of Joseph's name in Egypt (Gen. xli. 45, also chap. xxiv. 17 below). To these may be added the changes mentioned in the book of Daniel (Dan. i. 7).

and [R.V. but he] *took Jehoahaz* away] i.e. From Riblah, and carried him with him prisoner into Egypt, where he died. On his death see Jer. xxii. 11, 12.

35. *he exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land*] The king did not undertake to pay, as had been done aforetime (cf. xvi. 8; xviii. 15) this tax out of any treasures in the house of the Lord,

Jehoiakim *was* twenty and five years old when he *began* 36
to reign; and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And
his mother's name *was* Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah
of Rumah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of 37
the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. In 24
his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up, and
Jehoiakim became his servant three years: then he turned
and rebelled against him. And the LORD sent against him 2

or of the king's house. In those troublous days there was likely to be but little in store, so a tax was laid on the whole people.

XXIII. 36—XXIV. 7. JEHOIAKIM KING OF JUDAH. NEBUCHADNEZZAR MAKES HIM TRIBUTARY. HIS MANY ADVERSARIES. JEHOIACHIN, HIS SON, SUCCEEDS HIM. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 5—8.)

36. *His mother's name* was *Zebudah*] R.V. **Zebidah.** The R.V. follows the spelling of the *Kethib*. The name *Rumah*, the native place of Zebidah, is not mentioned elsewhere. It has been conjectured that it is the same as Dumah (ד and ר being in Hebrew writing most easily interchanged). Dumah (Josh. xv. 52) was in the hill country of Judah, near Hebron, from which neighbourhood (*viz.* Libnah) another of Josiah's wives came. The R at the beginning is however represented by the LXX., which has Ῥουμά.

XXIV. 1. *Nebuchadnezzar...came up*] We learn from Jeremiah (xlvi. 2) that Pharaoh-nechoh was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar at the Euphrates near Carchemish in the fourth year of Jehoiakim. The Egyptian king had probably left his army at Carchemish on his own return to Egypt. After routing the Egyptian force the king of Babylon came forward to attack those lands which had submitted to Pharaoh, Judah among the rest.

Nebuchadnezzar was the son and successor of Nabopolassar, who founded the Babylonian Empire. It was while Nebuchadnezzar was engaged in this expedition against the Egyptians and their allies that he was recalled to take the throne of Babylon. He had been acting as general for his father, though to the Jewish mind he would appear as king of Babylon, especially as he so soon after became in reality king and was made known to them as such by terrible experience.

Jehoiakim became his servant three years] i.e. He undertook to pay a certain yearly tribute to Babylon. The conqueror appears also to have carried off captives from Jerusalem, for it was at this time that Daniel and his companions were taken away (Dan. i. 1). It would seem from the history in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6 that Nebuchadnezzar's intention had been to take Jehoiakim away, for it is stated that he 'bound him in fetters to carry him to Babylon'. See on this also the language of Ezek. xix. 9. But by some means he was maintained on his throne. After three years of vassalage, however, he rebelled, probably thinking that he could get help from Egypt.

bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon, and sent them against Judah to destroy it, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by his servants the pro-
3 phets. Surely at the commandment of the LORD came *this* upon Judah, to remove *them* out of his sight, for the sins of
4 Manasseh, according to all that he did; and also *for* the innocent blood that he shed: for he filled Jerusalem *with*
5 innocent blood; which the LORD would not pardon. Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are*

2. *And the Lord sent against him bands of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans.** The bands were irregular marauding parties which were allowed, perhaps encouraged, to overrun the country of the rebellious vassal before the great king could put his trained force in motion. These marauders did not consist only of Babylonians (Chaldæans) but comprised also bodies from the surrounding people, Syria, Moab and Ammon, whom Nebuchadnezzar had compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Babylon in the same way as Judah had done. On this mixed army of assailants cf. Jer. xxv. 9.

according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by [R.V. **by the hand of**] *his servants the prophets*] Much more stress is laid in Kings on the judgement being Jehovah's work than in Chronicles. '*The Lord* sent the bands', they came 'according to the *Lord's word*' and 'at *His* commandment'. The prophets had been predicting judgements to come ever since the days of Ahaz, when Isaiah prophesied. Jeremiah says, in the chapter just quoted (xxv. 3), that his own appeals had been long and unavailing. A special prophecy of Isaiah concerning these events is found above (2 Kings xx. 17).

3. *for the sins of Manasseh*] See above ch. xxiii. 26. The fifty-five years of Manasseh's rule sealed the nation's fate.

4. *which* [R.V. **and**] *the Lord would not pardon*] The example, set for so long a time, had so penetrated the national character, that Jehovah, who multiplies His pardon (Is. lv. 7), could bear with the transgressions no longer. We gather from Chronicles that Jehoiakim did evil like his predecessors. His abominations that he did, and that which was found in him (probably meaning, the evil found in his ways), were written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

5. *the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim*] One of the most conspicuous acts of Jehoiakim's impiety was the burning of Jeremiah's roll of prophecies (Jer. xxxvi.), and the way in which evil-doing had made men callous is expressed in the prophet's narrative: 'Yet they were not afraid nor rent their garments, neither the king nor any of his servants'. So the prophecy of the Lord against Jehoiakim was, 'He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David'. In another place Jeremiah foretells (xxii. 18—19) the fate which shall befall him, 'They shall not lament for him...he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth

they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers: and Jehoia- 6
chin his son reigned in his stead. And the king of Egypt 7
came not again any more out of his land: for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates all that pertained to the king of Egypt.

Jehoiachin *was* eighteen years old when he *began* to reign, 8
and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. And his mother's name *was* Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of 9

beyond the gates of Jerusalem'. And in another passage, 'His dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat and in the night to the frost'. The evil and self-indulgent character of Jehoiakim is abundantly set forth in Jeremiah xxii. 11—17.

6. *Jehoiakim slept with his fathers*] How the violent death which the prophet foretold came about the history makes no record. Whether he fell in fight with the numberless invaders, or, as seems suggested by the form of the prophecies quoted in the previous note, was slain by his own subjects and his body cast forth from the city we cannot decide. No mention is made of any burial.

7. *the king of Egypt came not again any more*] The whole Asiatic possessions of Egypt had been conquered by the Babylonians, who now become the prominent heathen people in the Scripture story.

from the river [R.V. **brook**] *of Egypt*] This is not the Nile, but the modern *Wadi El Arish*, a desert stream toward the border of Egypt. See note on 1 Kings viii. 65 for its identification.

8—17. Reign of Jehoiachin. Capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Plunder and captives carried away: Zedekiah made king of Judah. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 9—10.)

8. *Jehoiachin* was *eighteen years old*] The Chronicler says *eight*. The letter which is required to make the difference is the smallest in the Hebrew alphabet, and may easily have fallen out by a slip of the copyist. That 'eighteen' is the correct number may be concluded because (see verse 15) Jehoiachin had *wives*, which would hardly be the case at *eight*. To the 'three months' of the king's reign here set down, the Chronicler adds 'and ten days', probably having before him a precise record. Though after the last reign we come no more upon quotations from the chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah. Jehoiachin is called *Jeconiah* in Jer. xxiv. 1, and *Coniah* in Jer. xxii. 24, 28. For the double form compare *Oshea* and *Jehoshua* (Numb. xiii. 16).

Elnathan of Jerusalem] Almost certainly the same person who is called 'Elnathan the son of Achbor' (Jer. xxvi. 22) and who was sent by Jehoiakim with a party of men into Egypt to fetch thence Urijah the prophet, whom Jehoiakim caused to be put to death. The name

10 the LORD, according to all that his father had done. At
that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon
11 came up *against* Jerusalem, and the city was besieged. And
Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, and
12 his servants *did* besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of
Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother,
and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the
king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign.
13 And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of
the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in

also occurs among the princes in the account of Jeremiah's roll (Jer. xxxvi. 12, 25). He was one of those who made intercession with the king not to burn it.

10. *the servants of Nebuchadnezzar...came up* against [R.V. **to**] *Jerusalem*] There is no preposition in the Hebrew, only the accusative of direction. On 'servants' see note on v. 13.

11. *Nebuchadnezzar came against* [R.V. **unto**] *the city, and his servants* did *besiege* [R.V. **were besieging**] *it*] Here a preposition is expressed, and the latter clause of the verse indicates that the siege had begun before Nebuchadnezzar came thither in person.

12. *Jehoiachin...went out to the king of Babylon*] He did as Rab-shakeh invited the people to do on a former occasion (xviii. 31) 'Come out to me.' This was to submit himself to Nebuchadnezzar, and in the hope of making an impression on the Babylonian king, Jehoiachin goes, taking with him the queen-mother, and all his chief men. On the influential position occupied in many Eastern states by the queen-mother, see note on 1 Kings ii. 19.

in the eighth year of his reign] i. e. Of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. We know from Jeremiah (xxv. 1) that the fourth year of Jehoiakim was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar. So the time just admits of the three months' reign of Jehoiachin, as his father reigned eleven years (xxiii. 36). In connexion with this captivity should be read the prophecy of Jeremiah xxiv. where under the type of good and bad figs, he speaks of the fate of the two sorts of people, those that are sent into the land of the Chaldæans for their good, and the rest, who like Zedekiah inclined to a league with Egypt. To this time belongs also Jeremiah's letter to the captives, full of wise advice and comforting promises (Jer. xxix. 1—23).

13. *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord*] According to the Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 7) some of the vessels of the house of the Lord had been taken to Babylon in the reign of Jehoiakim. With this agrees the notice in Daniel (i. 2) where we are told that the vessels were put by Nebuchadnezzar 'into the house of his god', or as the Chronicler records 'into his temple at Babylon'.

and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon...had made] We know from Ezra i. 7—11 that Cyrus gave back to the Jews after

pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and 14
all the mighty *men* of valour, *even* ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried 15
away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, *those* carried he *into* captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. And all the men of might, *even* seven thousand, and crafts- 16
men and smiths a thousand, all *that were* strong *and* apt for war, even them the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon. And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his 17

the captivity 5400 vessels of gold and silver. We must suppose that the larger portion of these had been taken away at first. This second plundering of the temple appears to have been conducted with much more violence than the former. The verb translated here 'cut in pieces' is rendered 'cut off' in the account of Hezekiah's stripping the gold from the temple doors (xviii. 16), and before that (xvi. 17) of Ahaz 'cutting off' the borders of the bases. So that here we are probably to understand that Nebuchadnezzar stripped all that was overlaid with gold. That there was a large quantity of gold so used by Solomon we see from the account in 1 Kings vi.

as the Lord had said] Formerly to Hezekiah after his ostentation (xx. 17).

14. *he carried away all Jerusalem*] The policy of Nebuchadnezzar was to remove out of the way all those who might be able to organize and plan a revolt when he and his army had departed. Hence all the people of rank, of wealth, and of skill as handicraftsmen are deported, and only the poorest folk left, who had neither knowledge nor means for doing more than work of drudgery. The total number of captives was 10,000. In verse 16 the numbers of some classes are specified, the 'men of might' were 7000, and the craftsmen 1000, which leaves 2000 for the royal household and their retainers, and the princes and the others who are spoken of in the general phrase as 'strong and apt for war'. Such men it would have been dangerous to leave behind. In this captivity the prophet Ezekiel was included. See Ezekiel i. 3.

17. *Mattaniah*] He was the brother of Jehoiakim, and as we gather from 1 Chron. iii. 15, he was Josiah's third son. He is wrongly called 'the brother' of Jehoiachin, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10, unless we accept the word translated 'brother' for some general term of relationship and render it 'kinsman'. Thus Lot is called Abraham's *brother*, Gen. xiv. 16 and Bethuel also in Gen. xxiv. 48. So also in 2 Kings x. 13 'the *brethren* of Ahaziah were not all that king's *brothers*'. On the changing of names of persons taken captive or placed in some position of subjection see note on xxiii. 34.

father's brother king in his stead, and changed his name *to* Zedekiah.

18 Zedekiah *was* twenty and one years old when he *began* to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name *was* Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of
19 Libnah. And he did *that* which *was* evil in the sight of
20 the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. For through the anger of the LORD it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, until he had cast them out from his presence,
25 that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon. And

Zedekiah] Both this name and *Mattaniah* have *Jah* = Jehovah for their termination. We may therefore suppose that the choice of his new name was left to the Jewish king. *Mattan-jah* = gift of Jehovah; *Zedek-jah*, righteousness of Jehovah.

XXIV. 18—XXV. 7. ZEDEKIAH KING OF JUDAH. HE REBELS AGAINST NEBUCHADNEZZAR. JERUSALEM TAKEN. ZEDEKIAH PUT TO DEATH. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 11—21; Jeremiah lii. 1—11.)

18. *Hamutal*] See xxiii. 31.

19. *according to all that Jehoiakim had done*] For Jehoiakim's character, see above on verse 5.

20. *For through the anger of the Lord it came* [did it come] *to pass*] Still the same language as in xxiii. 27 and in xxi. 12—14, and all pointing to the evil practices of Manasseh and his times. The picture in 2 Chronicles xxxvi. 14—16, sets before us the way in which the evil doings had corrupted all classes. 'The chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much after all the abominations of the heathen and polluted the house of the Lord. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy'. God was deemed to be specially present in the temple at Jerusalem, hence the captivity was a removal from His sight.

that [R.V. and] *Zedekiah rebelled*] It is better to translate the conjunction as the mere copulative, putting a strong stop after 'presence'. There were several stages in Zedekiah's progress to complete revolt. The Chronicler (2 Chron. xxxvi. 12) says that Nebuchadnezzar had made the new king swear unto him by God, perhaps thinking such an oath would be more binding than if he sware by any other oath. We know (Jerem. xxix. 3) that Zedekiah sent an embassy to the king of Babylon, apparently with the desire of getting back the captives who had been taken away with Jeconiah. If this were really his wish it did not succeed, and thus the wish to revolt may have arisen. A little

it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it; and they built forts against it round about. And the city was besieged unto the eleventh 2

later Zedekiah went himself in the company of Seraiah (Jer. li. 59) to Babylon. This was in the fourth year of his reign. Amid all these communications with the conqueror, we learn (Jer. xxvii. 3) that messengers came to Jerusalem from the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon, who all seemed anxious to form a league against Babylon. Zedekiah listened to false prophets like Hananiah (Jer. xxviii. 1—4), who told him that the yoke of the king of Babylon was to be broken and the captives all to be brought back, and along with them the vessels of the house of the Lord. Disappointed of his petitions, and encouraged by the kings round about him, and by the smooth things he heard at home, Zedekiah revolted, probably refusing to pay the yearly tribute and sending (Ezek. xvii. 15) down to Egypt to obtain help in horses and chariots. Presently afterwards the Babylonian armies came once more against Jerusalem.

XXV. **1.** *in the ninth year of his reign*] i.e. Of Zedekiah's reign. How long before this, the neglect to pay the tribute, which was the usual indication of disaffection, had gone on we are not told. The Babylonian power might overlook the first omission, but perhaps not the second. So we may date the determination to revolt from about the seventh year of Zedekiah's reign. Thus time would be given for such preparations as in the weak condition of the land he could make.

and pitched [R.V. **encamped**] *against it*] The verb is one of constant occurrence in the descriptions of the marches of the Israelites from Egypt. There 'to pitch' is a very suitable word, but the Babylonian armies did not intend to move till the city of Jerusalem was taken. So 'encamp', the general term for such a military 'pitching' of tents, seems preferable.

built forts] To the precise character of these erections the word gives no clue by its derivation. It is always used for works built *against* a city by the attacking party. Hence we must suppose some line of enclosure to be intended, or erections from which the besiegers could with greater effect discharge missiles over the walls.

2. *unto the eleventh year*] The natural strength of the position of Jerusalem must have been very considerable, for such a rabble as remained to be able to hold out nearly two years against the forces of Babylon. We know however (Jer. xxxiv. 7) that Nebuchadnezzar's troops were engaged at the same time in attacking Lachish and Azekah. So that a part only of his soldiers were employed against Jerusalem. We find too (Jer. xxxvii. 5, 11) that, on the report that the army of Pharaoh was coming forth out of Egypt, the siege of Jerusalem was so far relaxed that Jeremiah undertook to leave the city and depart into the land of Benjamin but was stopped at the gate by Irijah.

3 year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth*
month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no
4 bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken
up, and all the men of war *fled* by night *by* the way of the
gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now
the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the*
5 *king* went the way toward the plain. And the army of the
Chaldees pursued after the king, and overtook him in the
plains of Jericho: and all his army were scattered from him.

3. *And on the ninth* day *of the* fourth *month*] The words in italic omitted here by the scribe, can be filled up from Jer. xxxix. 2; lii. 6.

the famine prevailed] R.V. **was sore.** The verb is that which is found used of famine in Gen. xli. 56, 57, though we have a different word for a *sore* famine in xliii. 1. The rendering of R.V. is from A.V. in Jer. xxxix. 6.

4. *And the city was broken up*] R.V. **Then a breach was made in the city.** The old phrase 'broken up' was the same in sense as 'broken through'. See 2 Chron. xxiv. 7; Jer. xxxix. 7; Micah ii. 13; Matth. xxiv. 43; Mark ii. 4.

We have a more full account of the events here alluded to in Jer. xxxix. 2—7. There we learn that when the breach had been made the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the middle gate, and when Zedekiah saw them he and his men of war fled.

the men of war fled *by night*] The verb is supplied, but appears in the text of Jer. xxxix. 4; lii. 7. The scribe in this passage has been much at fault.

by *the way of the gate between two* [R.V. **the two**] *walls*] This was a definite locality. The A.V. translates as R.V. in Jerem. xxxix. From its proximity to the king's garden, this gate must be the same which is called in Neh. ii. 14; iii. 15, 'the gate of the fountain'. It was close to the pool of Siloam, and so the way through it would lead down to the Kidron valley.

which is [R.V. **was**] *by the king's garden*] The past tense suits the narrative and its date better. Whether the king's garden was outside or within the walls does not appear.

and the king *went the way* [R.V. **by the way**] *toward the plain*] R.V. **of the Arabah.** See note on xiv. 25. The whole valley from the sea of Galilee southward to the desert was called by this name. On the character of this flight compare the words of Ezek. xii. 12.

5. *And* [R.V. **But**] *the army of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldeans.** This change in the name of the people of Babylon is made in every place through the chapter. As the troops were all round the city there was very little chance for the king to get away. In his flight he was making for the Jordan, thinking pursuit to be more difficult in the mountainous region on the east of the river. But he was overtaken in the plains of Jericho, before the river was reached.

So they took the king, and brought him up to the king of 6
Babylon to Riblah; and they gave judgement upon him.
And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put 7
out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him with fetters of
brass, and carried him *to* Babylon.

And in the fifth month, on the seventh *day* of the month, 8

6. *So* [R.V. **Then**] *they took the king, and brought him up to* [R.V. **unto**] *the king of Babylon*] Nebuchadnezzar was stationed at some distance, and was awaiting the issue of the campaign. The verb rendered 'take' implies seizure as a prisoner. It is used before (x. 14) '*Take them* alive'.

to Riblah] See on xxiii. 33.

and they gave judgement upon him] Jer. xxxix. 5 says, '*He* gave judgement upon him'. No doubt the proceeding was of this kind. The king appointed a committee to try Zedekiah, and when they had given their sentence, Nebuchadnezzar commanded it to be carried into effect.

7. *slew the sons of Zedekiah*] This was done to prevent the rise of a new revolt under a successor. To do it in the sight of the father was to break down all his hope of any rightful successor taking his throne. The narrative in Jeremiah adds that Nebuchadnezzar 'slew all the nobles of Judah'. Not only was the royal family destroyed, but the men of power and influence were all extinguished.

put out the eyes of Zedekiah] This punishment the Philistines inflicted on Samson (Jud. xvi. 21) before they put him in the prison-house. The LXX. had this instance so much in mind that they say Zedekiah was put *εἰς οἰκίαν μύλωνος*. The deprivation of the eyes was not uncommon in the East as a punishment (cf. Herod. VII. 18).

It is very striking to put side by side the two prophecies concerning Zedekiah uttered the one by Jeremiah, the other by Ezekiel. The former said (xxxiv. 3) 'Thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon (cf. Jer. xxxii. 4); the latter (xii. 13) says of this king 'I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldæans, yet shall he not see it though he shall die there'.

and bound him with fetters of brass] R.V. **in fetters**. There is no need to express the metal of which the fetters were made. In English on the contrary we speak of 'putting a man in *irons*' and omit 'fetters'. The Hebrew word is dual, and properly signifies 'double fetters'. His legs as well as his hands were shackled.

and carried him to *Babylon*] The narrative in Jeremiah adds 'and put him in prison till the day of his death'.

8—21. BURNING OF JERUSALEM, THE TEMPLE, AND ALL THE CHIEF BUILDINGS. MORE CAPTIVES TAKEN. THE BRASS WORK OF THE TEMPLE CARRIED OFF. CAPTIVES SLAIN AT RIBLAH. (2 Chron. xxxvi. 17—29; Jeremiah lii. 12—29.)

8. *on the seventh* day] Jeremiah says *the tenth day*. The slight

which *is* the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzar-adan, captain of the guard, a servant
9 of the king of Babylon, *unto* Jerusalem: and he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great *man's* house burnt he with fire.
10 And all the army of the Chaldees, that *were with* the captain of the guard, brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about.
11 Now the rest of the people that were left in the city, and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon, with the remnant of the multitude, did Nebuzar-adan the captain of

differences in numbers are easily accounted for when we remember that the Hebrews marked their numbers by letters, and that there is great similarity between many of the letters of their alphabet.

Nebuzar-adan, captain [R.V. **the captain**] *of the guard*] The title 'captain of the guard', literally 'chief of the slaughterers', is found in Gen. xxxvii. 36 and frequently afterwards in that book. Then only in 2 Kings xxv. and in Jeremiah xxxix. and following chapters, all relating to the Babylonian captivity. Probably this officer was at first the executioner, and the name was retained after the duties had been delegated. We find in 1 Kings ii. 25, 35, 46, Benaiah the captain of Solomon's host acting as the executioner of Adonijah, Joab and Shimei.

This officer Nebuzar-adan was sent by Nebuchadnezzar to take charge of all that was done after Jerusalem had been actually taken. His behaviour to Jeremiah was of the most generous character, and appears to have been guided by the directions of the king of Babylon. (Cf. Jer. xl. 4 with xxxix. 11—12.) We hear of another visit of Nebuzar-adan to Jerusalem in the 23rd year of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. lii. 30), when he carried off 745 additional captives with him to Babylon.

9. *every great* man's *house burnt he with fire*] R.V. omits 'man's'. The expression in 2 Chronicles is 'he burnt all the palaces thereof with fire'.

11. *Now the rest* [R.V. **And the residue**] *of the people*] The change is in accordance with Jer. lii. 15 where the same people are spoken of.

and the fugitives that fell away to the king of Babylon] R.V. **and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon.** This alteration is also from A.V. in the parallel passage just referred to, where the Hebrew is the same as here.

with the remnant [R.V. **residue**] *of the multitude*] Also R.V. adds **captive** after 'carry away' at the close of the verse. Thus the two parallel and nearly identical passages are brought as closely into agreement in the English as they are in the original.

Nebuzar-adan took the residue of the better sort, both those who still were faithful to their country and those who had gone over to the Babylonian side, and the residue of the common folks, who were likely

the guard carry away. But the captain of the guard left of 12
the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.
And the pillars of brass that *were in* the house of the LORD, 13
and the bases, and the brasen sea that *was* in the house of
the LORD, did the Chaldees break *in pieces*, and carried the
brass of them to Babylon. And the pots, and the shovels, 14
and the snuffers, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass
wherewith they ministered, took they *away*. And the fire- 15
pans, and the bowls, *and* such *things* as *were of* gold, *in*
gold, and *of* silver, *in* silver, the captain of the guard took
away. The two pillars, one sea, and the bases which Solo- 16
mon had made for the house of the LORD; the brass of all
these vessels was without weight. The height of the one 17
pillar *was* eighteen cubits, and the chapiter upon it *was*
brass: and the height of the chapiter three cubits; and the
wreathen work, and pomegranates upon the chapiter round

to prove useful in some settlement or other, and carried both these classes with him.

12. *left of the poor* [R.V. **poorest**] *of the land*] The word was so rendered above in xxiv. 14. Now that the great houses and their inhabitants were gone and the craftsmen also, the life became no better than that of the nomads, and the people left behind could only turn to keeping the land in cultivation. Jeremiah (xxxix. 10) calls them 'the poor of the people, which had nothing'.

13. *and the pillars of brass*] These were the pillars, Jachin and Boaz, the two masterpieces of Hiram mentioned in 1 Kings vii. 15. Their position was not within the house, but in the porch (see 1 Kings vii. 21 and all the notes there).

and the bases] See 1 Kings vii. 27. These were richly wrought stands to support the lavers used in the sacrificial services.

and the brasen sea that was [R.V. **were**] *in the house of the Lord*] On the brasen sea, see 1 Kings vii. 23. Both the bases and the sea were within the inner court.

15. *and the bowls*] R.V. **basons.** All these vessels are enumerated among the things provided for the temple services in the account of Solomon's temple referred to above.

and *such* things *as* were of *gold* in *gold, and* of *silver* in *silver*] R.V. **that which was of gold, in gold, and that which was of silver, in silver.** The R.V. has here conformed to the A.V. in Jer. lii. 19, where the original is the same.

16. *the brass...was without weight*] This is said before in the account of their casting, 1 Kings vii. 47.

17. *and the chapiter upon it* was *brass*] R.V. **and a chapiter of brass was upon it.** The sentence is not meant to state of what material the chapiter was, but that it was there on the top of the pillar.

about, all *of* brass: and like unto these had the second pillar
18 with wreathen work. And the captain of the guard took
Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest,
19 and the three keepers of the door: and out of the city he
took an officer that was set over the men of war, and five
men of them that were in the king's presence, which were
found in the city, and the principal scribe of the host, which
mustered the people of the land, and threescore men of the
20 people of the land that were found in the city: and Nebuzar-
adan captain of the guard took these, and brought them
21 to the king of Babylon to Riblah: and the king of Babylon
smote them, and slew them at Riblah in the land of Hamath.
So Judah was carried away out of their land.

wreathen work] R.V. **network.** Twice over the change is needed in this verse, to correspond with the rendering of A.V. in 1 Kings vii. 18, 20, 41, 42.

18. *Seraiah, the chief priest*] Probably the son of Azariah and grandson of Hilkiah (1 Chron. vi. 14). His name is not found except in the parallel narratives.

Zephaniah the second priest] This was the son of Maaseiah (Jer. xxi. 1). He was the successor in office of Jehoiada (Jer. xxix. 25, 26). The particulars known of his history are that he was asked by Shemaiah the Nehelamite (Jer. xxix. 29) to punish Jeremiah as if he were a false prophet. Zephaniah was also sent on two occasions to Jeremiah, once to ask the result of the siege, and secondly, to beg the prophet to intercede for the people (Jer. xxvii. 3).

On 'second priest' see note on xxiii. 4 above.

the three keepers of the door] These were the three Levites stationed one at each chief entrance to the temple.

19. *five men of them that were in the king's presence*] R.V. **that saw the king's face.** For the expression, cf. Esther i. 14. The officer over the men of war, and the five persons admitted to closest intimacy with the king, together with the scribe, represented the remaining conspicuous persons in the city: Seraiah and the others were prominent among the servants of the temple.

principal scribe of the host] R.V. **the scribe, the captain of the host.** This was the chief military secretary, Secretary at War. Some would render 'the scribe of the captain of the host,' and suggest that his superior officer had been already taken away, or had fled.

threescore men of the people of the land] These, though undefined, had made themselves obnoxious in some way or other; else they would not have been taken and put to death among the distinguished people named before them.

21. *and slew them* [R.V. **put them to death**] *at Riblah*] The word is not the same as in verse 7, and the R.V. follows A.V. of Jer. lii. 27.

So Judah was carried away out of their [R.V. **his**] *land*] The A.V.

And *as for* the people that remained in the land of Judah, 22
whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left, even over
them he made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of
Shaphan, ruler. And when all the captains of the armies, 23
they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had
made Gedaliah governor, there came to Gedaliah *to* Mizpah,
even Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and Johanan the son of

has 'his own' in Jer. lii. Jeremiah gives the totals of this captivity thus. In the seventh year of Nebuchadnezzar 3023, in the eighteenth year 832, and in the three-and-twentieth year 745, making a total of 4600. Jer. lii. 28—30.

22—26. GEDALIAH IS MADE GOVERNOR OF THE PEOPLE REMAINING IN JERUSALEM. HE IS SLAIN, AND THE PEOPLE FLEE TO EGYPT. (Not in Chronicles. Cf. Jeremiah, chaps. xl. and xli.)

22. *And* as for *the people that remained*] R.V. **were left**. The change is in accordance with A.V. in verse 11 above.

made Gedaliah...ruler] R.V. **governor**. This man was of a conspicuous family, and is described by Josephus (*Ant.* x. 9. 1—3) as a man gentle and just. His father Ahikam had influence enough in the evil days of Jehoiakim to be able to protect and save the life of Jeremiah (Jer. xxvi. 24). His grandfather Shaphan was one of the great personages in the court of Josiah. Beyond what is related in these verses, little is known of Gedaliah, though the history of his brief rule is somewhat expanded by Jeremiah in the two chapters xl. and xli.

The change of rendering is in conformity with A.V. in Jer. xl. 7, and with the verse 23 next following.

23. *And* [R.V. **Now**] *when all the captains...heard*] The governorship of Gedaliah appears to have found much favour. We are told (Jer. xli.) that when Jeremiah was set at liberty by Nebuzar-adan at Ramah he at once made his way to Gedaliah; beside that the captains of the forces gathered to him, and so did the Jews that had escaped into the countries round about, Moab, Ammon and Edom; and it is said 'they gathered wine and summer fruits very much'. Meantime Gedaliah was warned that Baalis the king of the Ammonites had sent Ishmael to slay him, but he refused to credit the report, and when one of his friends voluntered to slay Ishmael, Gedaliah would not permit it.

captains of the armies] R.V. **forces**. Thus translated in Jer. xl. 7.

to *Mizpah*] See on 1 Kings xv. 22. Jerusalem was now in ruins. Mizpah was a strong place about six miles north of the Holy City.

Ishmael the son of Nethaniah] Jeremiah xli. 1 (see also below verse 25) adds that Nethaniah was the son of Elishama of the seed royal. How he was connected with the royal blood we cannot discover. He had been in the country of the Ammonites during the destruction of Jerusalem, and when Gedaliah was set up as governor in Mizpah he came into Judah, apparently at the instigation of Baalis, king of Ammon, with the purpose of slaying Gedaliah and occupying his place.

Careah, and Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and
24 their men. And Gedaliah sware to them, and to their men, and said unto them, Fear not to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon;
25 and it shall be well with you. But it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son

At first he acted as if friendly to Gedaliah, but after a short time, at a banquet where he and ten friends were entertained by Gedaliah, the murder of the governor was perpetrated, and at the same time all the Jews in the house with Gedaliah were likewise slain. All this was done with such precaution and secrecy that for two days nobody outside the governor's palace knew what had been done. After that time Ishmael, observing a party of fourscore pilgrims coming towards Mizpah, went to meet them, and bringing them into the courtyard of the house as if to see Gedaliah, had all but ten of them killed and cast into the well in the court. He now resolved on flight and taking away with him the daughters of Zedekiah, who had been put under Gedaliah's charge, he turned his steps to the land of Ammon. But Johanan and the other captains, who had by this time discovered the atrocious murders, pursued Ishmael, yet though they came up with him and his party 'by the great waters that were in Gibeon', and though Ishmael's followers were at once ready to desert him, the villain, and eight more with him, escaped into the country of the Ammonites.

Johanan the son of Careah] R.V. **Kareah**. This is the spelling of A.V. in Jeremiah xl. 8; xli. 11, &c. It was Johanan who warned Gedaliah of the plot against him. He is mentioned (Jer. xliii. 2—4) as one of those who were prominent in the proceedings when Jeremiah was carried off into Egypt. He is there classed among 'all the proud men'. A brother of his, Jonathan, is mentioned in Jer. xl. 8.

Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth] He is called here the Netophathite, but in the enumeration of Jeremiah that description is omitted, and some other persons are described as 'the sons of Ephai, the Netophathite'.

Jaazaniah the son of a [R.V. **the**] *Maachathite*] The name is spelt *Jezaniah* in Jeremiah's narrative.

24. *Gedaliah sware to them*] He gave them a most solemn promise that they should enjoy the security which he expected under the rule of the Chaldæans.

Fear not to be [R.V. **because of**] *the servants of the Chaldees*] R.V. **Chaldæans**. The alarm of the returning fugitives would be lest another Chaldæan force should come and do to Mizpah as they had done to Jerusalem.

25. *in the seventh month*] Jerusalem was overthrown in the fifth month (see above verse 8), so that but two months had elapsed, and

of Elishama, of the seed royal, came, and ten men with him, and smote Gedaliah, that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees that were with him at Mizpah. And all the 26
people, both small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose, and came *to* Egypt: for they were afraid of the Chaldees.

And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the 27
captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the seven and twentieth *day* of the month, *that* Evil-merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he *began* to reign, did lift up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah out of prison; and he spake kindly to him, and set his throne 28

Gedaliah's influence had begun, even in that brief period, to inspire much confidence.

that he died, and the Jews and the Chaldees [R. V. Chaldæans] *that were with him*] See above on verse 23.

26. *all the people...and the captains of the armies* [R.V. forces] *arose and came* to *Egypt*] Feeling now sure that there would be reason to fear because of the servants of the Chaldæans. They were in a panic, and fled away in spite of the exhortations of Jeremiah, and they carried Jeremiah with them into Egypt (Jerem. xliii. 1—7). On their arrival at Tahpanhes and on the prophetic action of Jeremiah there, read Jer. xliii. 8—13. Other Jewish settlements in Egypt mentioned by the prophet (xliv. 1) are Migdol, Noph and the country of Pathros.

27—30. JEHOIACHIN KING OF JUDAH KINDLY TREATED BY EVIL-MERODACH KING OF BABYLON. (Jer. lii. 31—34.)

27. *the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin*] Thus twenty-six years had elapsed since Jerusalem was overthrown.

on the seven and twentieth day *of the month*] In Jeremiah it is put down as the five-and-twentieth. That the year, month and day are so carefully noted (for the variation is easily understood) shews that the captive Jews regarded the act of Evil-merodach as a gleam of hope for all the nation.

Evil-merodach king of Babylon] He was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar. Coming to the throne B.C. 561, he ruled for two years till B.C. 559, and then was murdered by his brother-in-law, Neriglissar, who thus made himself king of Babylon.

did lift up the head of Jehoiachin] For the expression, signifying 'to shew favour to', compare Gen. xl. 13, 20, where Pharaoh in a similar manner is said to have 'lifted up the head' of his chief butler, when he released him from prison and restored him to his post.

28. *and set his throne above the throne*, &c.] i.e. He gave him precedence, perhaps by causing him to sit at the table in a place nearer to himself, and also by manifesting special regard for him. That other kings were in the same condition as Jehoiachin, and had been brought

above the throne of the kings that *were* with him in Babylon,
29 and changed his prison garments: and he did eat bread
30 continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day, all the days of his life.

to Babylon because they were troublesome in their own countries, we can see from this verse. Some however were imprisoned, as Jehoiachin had been, while others were at liberty but confined to Babylon and the court.

29. *And changed* [R.V. **he changed**] *his prison garments*] For the subject is Jehoiachin, not Evil-merodach. So R.V. omits 'he' in the next clause.

did eat bread continually before him] R.V. **before him continually**. i.e. He himself was a constant guest at the royal table.

30. *And his* [R.V. **for his**] *allowance*] i.e. He was assigned a regular amount in money or in kind for the keeping of such attendants as a captive king might be supposed to require.

a daily rate for every day] R.V. **every day a portion**. This is the A.V. rendering in Jerem. lii. 34, where the history says 'until the day of his death all the days of his life', an emphatic mode of expressing that the king's mind did not change, nor was the arrangement altered by Evil-merodach's successor.

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